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TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1916

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THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

From a Painting by W. L. Taylor

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TEACHERS' GUIDE

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1915

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1915

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph.D.

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HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Selected by the International Sunday-School Lesson Committee—American Section

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FIRST QUARTER

I. **M.** Judges 2:7–19. God's Patience with Israel.
T. Judges 2:20—3:6. Israel and the Nations.
W. Judges 3:7–23. Oppression and Deliverance.
T. Psalm 145:8–21. Praise for Jehovah's Goodness.
F. Psalm 103:1–14. Praise for Jehovah's Mercies.
S. Hosea 11:1–11. God's Mercy to Israel.
S. Exodus 15:1–13. Song of Deliverance.

II. **M.** Judges 4:4–16. Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel.
T. Judges 5:1–22. The Song of Deborah.
W. Genesis 14:11–24. Abram Delivers Lot.
T. Exodus 14:15–25. Jehovah Delivers the Israelites.
F. 1 Samuel 30:16–25. David Rescues his People.
S. Isaiah 37:26–36. Jehovah Saves Jerusalem.
S. Isaiah 59:9–21. Jehovah the Deliverer.

III. **M.** Judges 6:11-24. The Call of Gideon
T. Judges 6:25–40. Gideon's Zeal for Jehovah.
W. Judges 6:1–10. Oppression by Midian.
T. Exodus 3:1–10. The Call of Moses.
F. Isaiah 6:1–13. The Call of Isaiah.
S. Acts 22:1–15. The Call of Saul (Paul).
S. 2 Timothy 1:1-14. A Holy Calling.

IV. **M.** Judges 7:1–8. Gideon and the Three Hundred.
T. Judges 7:9–23. Defeat of Midian.
W. Judges 8:22–28. Gideon Refuses to be King.
T. Judges 9:7–21. Israel's Folly.
F. Judges 9:41–57. Death of A Wicked King.
S. Judges 10:6–16. Sin and Repentance.
S. Judges 11:29–40. A Foolish Vow.

V. **M.** Judges 13:8–16, 24, 25. The Birth of Samson.
T. Numbers 6:1–12. Wine Forbidden the Nazirite.
W. Jeremiah 35:1–11. Faithfulness of the Rechabites.
T. Jeremiah 35:12–19. Obedience and its Reward.
F. Isaiah 28:1–13. Drunkenness Condemned.
S. 1 Corinthians 8:1–13. Self-Denial for Sake of Others.
S. Galations 5:13–24. Walk in the Spirit.

VI. **M.** Ruth 1:6–18. Ruth Chooses the True God.
T. Joshua 24:14–28. The Israelites' Choice.
W. Hebrews 11:23–31. Choice of Faith.
T. 1 Kings 3:4–15. Solomon's Choice.
F. Zechariah 8:14–23. The Nations' Choice.
S. Deuteronomy 30:11–20. A Life and Death Choice.
S. Philippians 3:1–16. The Supreme Choice

VII. **M.** 1 Samuel 3:1–13, 19, 20. Samuel Called to be a Prophet.
T. 1 Samuel 1:21–28. A Devout Mother.
W. 1 Samuel 2:1–10. Song of Thanksgiving.
T. Jeremiah 1:4–12. Jeremiah Called
F. Ezekiel 2:1–10. Ezekiel Called.
S. Ezekiel 33:1–9. Prophetic Responsibility.
S. Ephesians 4:1–16. A Universal Call.

VIII. **M.** 1 Samuel 4:1–18. The Death of Eli and his Sons.
T. 1 Samuel 2:12–17, 22–26. The Bad Sons of Eli.
W. 1 Samuel 2:27–36. Prophecy against Eli's House.
T. Ezekiel 18:1–9. Reward of the Righteous.
F. Ezekiel 18:10–20. Personal Responsibility.
S. Ezekiel 18:21–32. Penitence and Life.
S. Psalm 16:1–11. Triumph in Death.

IX. **M.** 1 Samuel 7:3–17. Samuel, the Victorious Leader.
T. 1 Samuel 5:1–12. Terror in Philistia.
W. 1 Samuel 6:7–16. Return of the Ark.
T. 1 Samuel 12:1–12. Samuel's Farewell.
F. 1 Samuel 12:13–25. Exhortation to Faithfulness.
S. Psalms 123 and 124. Trust and Deliverance.
S. Psalm 116. Thanksgiving for Deliverance.

X. **M.** 1 Samuel 9:17—10:1. Saul Anointed King.
T. 1 Samuel 8:1–9. Demand for a King.
W. 1 Samuel 8:10–22. Samuel's Warning.

T. 1 Samuel 9:1–16. Choice of a Leader.
F. 1 Samuel 10:2–13. Saul among the Prophets.
S. Deuteronomy 17:14–20. The Ideal King.
S. Isaiah 44:24—45:7. Anointed for Service.

XI. **M.** 1 Samuel 11. Saul Gains his Kingdom.
T. 1 Samuel 10:17–27. Saul Chosen King.
W. 1 Samuel 13:1–9. Saul's Sacrifice.
T. 1. Samuel 13:10–23. Israel's Peril.
F. Luke 20:19–26. Human and Divine Authority.
S. Romans 13:1–7. Obedience to Rulers.
S. Acts 4:5–22. Boldness of Obedience.

XII. **M.** 1 Samuel 14:1–13. Jonathan and his Armorbearer.
T. 1 Samuel 14:14–23. Israel Victorious.
W. 1 Samuel 14:24–35. Jonathan's Trespass.
T. 1 Samuel 14:36–46. Jonathan's Rescue.
F. Isaiah 7:1–9. Reward of Courageous Faith.
S. Psalm 121. The Great Protector.
S. Ephesians 6:10–20. The Christian Armor.

XIII. **M.** Nehemiah 9:26–31. God's Mercies to Disobedient Israel.
T. Judges 2:7–19. God's Patience with Israel.
Judges 4:4–16. Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel.
W. Judges 6:11–40. The Call of Gideon.
Judges 7. Gideon and the Three Hundred.
T. Judges 13:8–16, 24, 25. The Birth of Samson.
Ruth 1. Ruth Chooses the True God.
F. 1 Samuel 3:1–13, 19, 20. Samuel Called to be a Prophet.
1 Samuel 4:1–18. The Death of Eli and His Sons.
S. 1 Samuel 7:3–17. Samuel, the Victorious Leader.
1 Samuel 9:17—10:1. Saul Anointed King.
S. 1 Samuel 11. Saul Gains his Kingdom.
1 Samuel 14:1–13. Jonathan and his Armorbearer.

SECOND QUARTER

I. **M.** 1 Samuel 15:10–23. Saul Rejected by the Lord.
T. 1 Samuel 15:1–9. Saul's Disobedience.
W. 1 Samuel 15:24–31. The Kingdom Taken from Saul.
T. Proverbs 3:11–26. Wisdom through Discipline.
F. 1 John 2:1–11. Blessedness of Obedience.
S. Deuteronomy 6:1–9. Obedience Rewarded.
S. Psalm 146:1–10. Trust in the Lord.

II. **M.** 1 Samuel 16:1–13. David Anointed King.
T. 1 Samuel 16:14–23. David with Saul.
W. 2 Samuel 7:4–17. The Covenant with David.
T. Jeremiah 33:14–26. The Covenant Renewed.
F. Acts 2:22–36. The Covenant Kept.
S. Psalm 132. Pleading Promises.
S. Psalm 110. The Triumphant King.

III. **M.** Psalm 23. The Shepherd Psalm.
T. John 10:1–13. The Good Shepherd.
W. John 10:14–24. The Shepherd's Love.
T. John 10:25–38. The Shepherd's Gift.
F. Zechariah 11:4–14. The Good Shepherd Rejected.
S. 1 Peter 5:1–11. The Chief Shepherd.
S. Luke 15:1–10. The Seeking Shepherd.

IV. **M.** 1 Samuel 17:38–51. David and Goliath.
T. 1 Samuel 17:1–11. Goliath's Challenge.
W. 1 Samuel 17:12–27. David's Visit to the Camp.
T. 1 Samuel 17:28–37. The Challenge Accepted.
F. 2 Timothy 4:1–8. Spiritual Victory.
S. Psalm 46. God a Sure Refuge.
S. Psalm 91. Divine Protection.

V. **M.** 1 Samuel 19:1–12. Saul Tries to Kill David.
T. 1 Samuel 21:1–9. David's Flight.
W. 1 Samuel 22:6–19. Priests at Nob Slain.
T. 1 Samuel 23:1–14. Flight from Keilah.
F. 1 Samuel 23:15–26. Saul Pursues David.
S. 1 John 3:1–12. Brotherly Love.
S. 1 John 3:13–24. Love and Hatred.

VI. **M.** 1 Samuel 20:32–42. Friendship of David and Jonathan.
T. 1 Samuel 18:1–16. A Friend at Court.
W. 1 Samuel 20:1–11. A Covenant of Friendship.
T. 1 Samuel 20:12–23. Service of Friendship.
F. 1 Samuel 20:24–31. Test of Friendship.
S. 2 Samuel 9:1–13. Recognition of Friendship.
S. 2 Samuel 1:17–27. Expression of Friendship.

VII. **M.** 1 Samuel 26:5–16. David Spares Saul.
T. 1 Samuel 26:17–25. The Power of Kindness.
W. 1 Samuel 24:1–8. Good for Evil.
T. 1 Samuel 24:9–22. Appeal for Fairness.
F. Matthew 5:38–48. The Law of the Kingdom.
S. Matthew 18:21–35. Duty toward Offenders.
S. 1 Peter 3:8–17. Christian Forbearance.

VIII. **M.** 2 Samuel 2:1–7; 5:1–5. David King over Judah and Israel.
T. 1 Samuel 31:1–13. Saul's Death.

W. 2 Samuel 3:17–30. ABNER SECEDES TO DAVID.
T. 2 Samuel 3:31–39. DAVID'S SORROW OVER ABNER'S DEATH.
F. 2 Samuel 4:5–12. ISH-BOSHETH SLAIN.
S. 1 Chronicles 17:1–15. PROMISES TO DAVID.
S. 1 Chronicles 17:16–27. DAVID'S FAITH.

IX. **M.** 2 Samuel 6:1–15. DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.
T. 2 Samuel 6:16–23. DAVID'S REJOICING.
W. 2 Samuel 7:18–29. DAVID'S PRAYER.
T. Exodus 25:10–22. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.
F. Psalm 125. JEHOVAH'S PRESENCE.
S. Psalm 122. JOY IN THE SANCTUARY.
S. Psalm 24. JEHOVAH ENTERING ZION.

X. **M.** 2 Samuel 11:22—12-7*a*. NATHAN REBUKES DAVID.
T. 2 Samuel 11:14–21. DAVID'S SIN.
W. 2 Samuel 12:7–23. DAVID'S PUNISHMENT.
T. Psalm 51. A CRY FOR PARDON.
F. Psalm 42. THIRSTING FOR GOD.
S. Psalm 38. PRAYER OF PENITENCE.
S. Hosea 14. PENITENCE AND RESTORATION.

XI. **M.** Psalm 32. BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS.
T. Psalm 25:1–11. PRAYER FOR PARDON.
W. Psalm 25:12–22. THE GOODNESS OF JEHOVAH.
T. 1 John 1:5—2:6. PENITENCE AND PARDON.
F. Luke 7:36–50. JOY OF PARDON.
S. Romans 4:1–9. PARDON FULL AND FREE.
S. Ephesians 4:25–32. RIGHTEOUS LIVING.

XII. **M.** Psalm 141. A PRAYER FOR THE TEMPTED.
T. Psalm 10. OVERTHROW OF THE WICKED.
W. Proverbs 1:7–19. WARNING AGAINST THE TEMPTER.
T. James 1:12–18. RESISTING TEMPTATION.
F. Proverbs 23:29–35. PERIL OF DRINK.
S. Habakkuk 2:9–16. WOES UPON THE EVIL-DOER.
S. 2 Corinthians 6:11–18. SEPARATION ENJOINED.

XIII. **M.** 1 Samuel 15:10–23. SAUL REJECTED BY THE LORD.
Matthew 28:1–10. THE RESURRECTION.
T. 1 Samuel 16:4–13. DAVID ANOINTED KING.
Psalm 23. THE SHEPHERD PSALM.
W. 1 Samuel 17:38–51. DAVID AND GOLIATH.
1 Samuel 19:1–12. SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID.
T. 1 Samuel 20:32–42. FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN.
1 Samuel 26:5–16. DAVID SPARES SAUL.
F. 2 Samuel 2:1–7; 5:1–5. DAVID KING OVER JUDAH AND ISRAEL.
1 Corinthians 12:1–13. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.
S. 2 Samuel 6:12–15; Psalm 24. DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.
2 Samuel 11:22—12:7*a*. NATHAN REBUKES DAVID.
S. Psalm 32. THE BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS.
Psalm 141. A PRAYER FOR THE TEMPTED.

THIRD QUARTER

I. **M.** 2 Samuel 18:1–15. ABSALOM'S FAILURE
T. 2 Samuel 15:1–12. ABSALOM'S AMBITION AND DECEIT.1
W. 2 Samuel 18:31—19.8; DAVID'S SORROW OVER ABSALOM.
T. Proverbs 13:1–11. A FATHER'S INSTRUCTION.
F. Galations 4:1–7. A TRUE SON AND HEIR.
S. Proverbs 3:1–10. THE WAY TO SUCCESS.
S. Hebrews 5:1–10. THE DIVINE SON.

II. **M.** 1 Kings 1:28–40. SOLOMON ANNOINTED KING.
T. 1 Kings 1:41–53. THE RIVAL SPARED.
W. 1 Kings 2:1–12. DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.
T. Matthew 5:13–20. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S KINGDOM.
F. Psalm 2. THE INVINCIBLE KING.
S. 1 Timothy 6:11–16. THE BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE.
S. 2 Peter 1-1–11. THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

III. **M.** 1 Kings 3:4–15. SOLOMON CHOOSES WISDOM.
T. Proverbs 8:1–11. CALL OF WISDOM.
W. 1 Corinthians 1:18–25. CHRIST THE WISDOM OF GOD.
T. Job 28.12-28. PLACE OF WISDOM.
F. Romans 11:25–36. RICHES OF WISDOM.
S. 1 Corinthians 3:18–23. WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS.
S. James 3:13–18. WISDOM FROM ABOVE.

IV. **M.** 1 Kings 8:22–30. SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE.
T. 1 Kings 8:54–61. SOLOMON BLESSES THE CONGREGATION.
W. 1 Corinthians 3:10–17. THE HUMAN TEMPLE.
T. John 2:13–22. THE TEMPLE OF GOD.
F. Matthew 12:1–8. GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE.
S. Hebrews 9:1–14. THE MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE.
S. Jeremiah 31:27–34. SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

V. **M.** 1 Kings 10:1–10, 13. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON.
T. Matthew 2:1–12. SEEKING THE KING.
W. John 12-20–32. GREEKS SEEKING JESUS.
T. Zechariah 1:12–17. THE GLORY OF ZION.
F. Proverbs 4:1–9. THE VALUE OF WISDOM.
S. Ecclesiastes 1:12–18. THE WORLD'S WISDOM.
S. Matthew 12:35–42. A GREATER THAN SOLOMON.

VI. **M.** 1 Kings 12:6–16. THE KINGDOM TORN ASUNDER.
T. 1 Kings 12:17–24. JEROBOAM MADE KING OF ISRAEL.

W. 1 Kings 11:6–13. The Division Prophesied.
T. 1 Kings 11:29–40. The Division Symbolized.
F. Luke 11:14–23. A Divided Kingdom.
S. Romans 7:7–25. A Divided Life.
S. John 17:11–26. Jesus' Prayer for Union.

VII. **M.** 1 Kings 12:25–33. Jeroboam Leads Israel into Sin.
T. Exodus 32:1–6. The Golden Calf.
W. 1 Kings 13:1–10. Jeroboam's Altar.
T. Romans 6:12–23. Wages of Sin.
F. Acts 17:22–34. The Altar at Athens.
S. Matthew 18:1–14. Causing to Stumble.
S. Hosea 8. Israel's Judgment.

VIII. **M.** 2 Chronicles 15:1–15. Asa's Good Reign.
T. 2 Chronicles 14:1–15. Asa's Zeal and Victory.
W. 2 Chronicles 16:1–10. Asa's Error.
T. Isaiah. 12. Jehovah our Strength.
F. Psalms 3 and 4. Trust in God.
S. Isaiah 54:11–17. Righteousness and Peace.
S. Isaiah 55. God's Goodness to Men.

IX. **M.** 1 Kings 17:1–16. God's Care of Elijah.
T. 1 Kings 17:17–24. God's Care of a Widow.
W. Matthew 10:34–42. A Prophet's Reward.
T. Luke 4:16–30. God's Care of Gentiles.
F. Psalm 27. God's Care in Trouble.
S. Psalm 37:16–26. God's Care in Famine.
S. Mark 6:35–44. God's Care of the Righteous.

X. **M.** 1 Kings 18:15–29. Elijah's Challenge.
T. 1 Kings 18:30–39. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal.
W. 1 Kings 18:41–46. The Drought Relieved.
T. James 5:12–20. Elijah a Man of Prayer.
F. Psalm 18:6–17. God's Approach in the Storm.
S. Exodus 19:16–25. The Flame from Sinai.
S. Hebrews 12:18–29. The Flame from the Heavenly Jerusalem.

XI. **M.** 1 Kings 19:1–14. Elijah's Flight.
T. 1 Kings 19:15–21. Elijah's Return.
W. Numbers 11:1–15. Appeal of Moses.
T. Psalm 73:1–22. The Cry of Despair.
F. Jonah 3:10—4:11. Jonah's Displeasure.
S. Romans 8:31–39. More than Conquerors.
S. John 16:1–15. The Voice of the Spirit.

XII. **M.** 1 Kings 20:10–21. Defeat through Drunkenness.
T. Isaiah 2:5–22. Helpless through Wrongdoing.
W. Amos 6:1–8. Revelry with Wine.
T. Isaiah 5:11–24. Greed and Drunkenness.
F. 1 Peter 4:1–11. Sobriety and Watchfulness.
S. Romans 14:13–23. Not Eating and Drinking.
S. 1 Corinthians 13:1–13. Mutual Helpfulness.

XIII. **M.** 2 Samuel 18:1–15. Absalom's Failure.
1 Kings 1:28–40. Solomon Anointed King.
T. 1 Kings 3:4–15. Solomon Chooses Wisdom.
1 Kings 8:22–30. Solomon Dedicates the Temple.
W. 1 Kings 10:1–10, 13. The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon.
1 Kings 12:6–16. The Kingdom Torn Asunder.
T. 1 Kings 12:25–33. Jeroboam Leads Israel into Sin.
2 Chronicles 15:1–15. Asa's Good Reign.
F. 1 Kings 17:1–16. God's Care of Elijah.
1 Kings 18:30–39. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal.
S. 1 Kings 19:8–18. Elijah's Flight and Return.
1 Kings 20:10–21. Defeat through Drunkenness.
S. Psalm 72. Obedience and Kingship.

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I. **M.** 1 Kings 21:11–20. Elijah in Naboth's Vineyard.
T. 1 Kings 21:1-10. Murderous Greed
W. Amos 8:1–10. Greed Condemned.
T. Micah 2:1–11. Woe upon Greedy Oppressors.
F. Amos 7:7–17. A Fearless Prophet.
S. Jeremiah 26:8–19. A Prophet's Perils.
S. Jeremiah 1:13–19. Strong in Jehovah.

II. **M.** 2 Kings 2:1–12*a*. Elijah Taken up into Heaven.
T. 2 Kings 2:12*b*–18. The Successor of Elijah.
W. 1 Kings 19:15–21. Elisha Chosen.
T. 2 Kings 4:1–7. A Widow Aided.
F. Mark 9:2–13. The True Elijah.
S. Matthew 11:2–14. Testimony of the Master.
S. Luke 24:44–53. Parting Words.

III. **M.** 2 Kings 5:1–14. Elisha Heals Naaman the Syrian.
T. 2 Kings 5:15–27. Unselfishness and Avarice.
W. Numbers 12:4-15. A Severe Lesson.
T. Matthew 20:20–28. A Call to Service.
F. Matthew 15:21–31. Friend and Healer.
S. Luke 17:11–19. Ten Lepers Healed.
S. Luke 10:25–37. The Good Samaritan.

IV. **M.** 2 Kings 6:8–23. Elisha's Heavenly Defenders.
T. 2 Kings 6:24—7:2. Promise of Plenty.
W. 2 Kings 7:3–8. Flight of the Enemy.
T. 2 Kings 7:9–20. The Promise Fulfilled.
F. Psalm 36. Jehovah's Lovingkindness.

S. Psalm 34:1–10. JEHOVAH THE DELIVERER.
S. Psalm 34:11–22. JEHOVAH THE HELPER.

V. M. 2 Kings 11:1–12. THE BOY JOASH CROWNED KING.
T. 2 Kings 11:13–20. WORSHIP REFORMED.
W. Exodus 2:1–10. THE BOY MOSES.
T. 1 Samuel 3:1–14. THE BOY SAMUEL.
F. Proverbs 4:10–27. ADVICE TO BOYS.
S. Luke 2:22–39. THE CHILD JESUS.
S. Luke 2:41–52. THE BOY JESUS.

VI. M. 2 Kings 12:4–15. JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE.
T. 1 Kings 8:12–21. THE TEMPLE BUILT.
W. 2 Kings 16:10–18. THE TEMPLE DISHONORED.
T. 2 Chronicles 29:1–11. THE TEMPLE CLEANSED.
F. Haggai 1:7–15. THE TEMPLE REBUILT.
S. Ezra 6:6–18. THE TEMPLE COMPLETED AND DEDICATED.
S. Matthew 21:12–17. JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE.

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W. Daniel 2-1–13. THE KING'S FORGOTTEN DREAM.
T. Daniel 2:14–24. DANIEL'S VISION.
F. Daniel 2:25–35. DANIEL BEFORE THE KING.
S. Daniel 2:36–49. INTERPRETATION AND EXALTATION.
S. Daniel 6:16–28. REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS.

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W. Jonah 1:17—2:10. DELIVERANCE AND PRAYER.
T. Jonah 4:1–11. COMPLAINT AND REBUKE.
F. Isaiah 60:1–9. UNIVERSAL DOMINION.
S. Isaiah 60:10–22. FUTURE GLORY.
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F. Isaiah 61:1–9. GOAL OF PROPHECY.
S. Matthew 10:16–23. SHEEP AMONG WOLVES.
S. Matthew 10:24–33. DIVINE PROTECTION.

X. M. 2 Chronicles 26:16–23. UZZIAH'S PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT.
T. 2 Chronicles 26:1–15. UZZIAH'S PROSPERITY.
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S. John 1:19–34. HUMILITY OF JOHN.
S. Matthew 3:1–17. JESUS AND JOHN

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T. Jeremiah 2:1–13. LOVE AND APOSTASY.
W. Jeremiah 3:11–18. ENCOURAGEMENT TO REPENTANCE.
T. Isaiah 1:2–9. A SINFUL NATION.
F. Isaiah 35:1–10. GLORIOUS RESTORATION.
S. Matthew 23:29–39. LAMENT OVER BACKSLIDING JERUSALEM.
S. Matthew 11:20–30. JESUS THE GIVER OF REST.

XII. M. 2 Kings 17:1–8. THE FALL AND CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.
T. 2 Kings 17:9–23. SIN THE CAUSE OF DISASTER.
W. Amos 4:4–13. ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS.
T. Amos 2:6–16. DESTRUCTION FORETOLD.
F. Hosea 9:1–9. PROPHETIC WARNING.
S. Amos 9:7–15. RESTORATION PROMISED.
S. Psalm 1. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED.

XIII. M. 1 Kings 21:11–20. ELIJAH IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD.
2 Kings 2:1–12*a*. ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN.
T. 2 Kings 5:1–14. ELISHA HEALS NAAMAN THE SYRIAN.
2 Kings 6:8–23. ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS.
W. 2 Kings 11–1:12. THE BOY JOASH CROWNED KING.
2 Kings 12:4–15. JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE.
T. Daniel 1:8–20. DANIEL IN THE KING'S COURT.
Jonah 3:1–10. JONAH A MISSIONARY TO NINEVEH.
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CHRONOLOGY

The chronology of our period—from Joshua to the Fall of Samaria—can not be given with any degree of certitude. Yet it is helpful to know the approximate dates, and their order. For convenience of reference, the following table is given, which is based upon the chronology of Hasting's Dictionary.

We may reckon the period of the Judges as from some time in the twelfth century B.C. to the accession of Saul about 1030 B.C.; David's reign 1017-977 B.C.; and Solomon's reign 977-937 B.C. The building of the Temple is assigned to 974-967 B.C.

Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah

Israel 937-722 B.C. Judah 937-586 B.C.

B.C.	Kings of Israel.	Kings of Judah.	Prophets' Public Ministry.
937	Jeroboam I.	Rehoboam.	
932		Invasion of Shishak.	
920		Abijam.	
917		Asa.	
915	Nadab.		
913	Baasha.		
889	Elah.		
887	Zimri.		
887	Omri.		
876		Jehoshaphat.	
875	Ahab.		
860–852			Elijah.
855–798			Elisha.
853	Ahaziah.		
851	Joram.	Jehoram.	
843		Ahaziah.	
842	Jehu.	Athaliah.	
842	Tribute to Shalmaneser.		
836		Joash.	
814	Jehoahaz.		
810		Tribute paid to Hazael.	
797	Jehoash.		
796		Amaziah.	
782		Uzziah.	
781	Jeroboam II.		
			Jonah, 2 K. 14.25.
760–750			Amos.
750–737			Hosea.
740–700			Isaiah.
740	Zechariah.		
740	Shallum.		
738	Menahen.		
738	Tribute paid to Tiglath-pileser.		
737		Jotham. (Co-regent with Uzziah, 751–737.)	
735	Pekahiah.	Ahaz.	
735	Pekah.		
733	Hoshea.		
725		Hezekiah.	
724			Micah.
722	Fall of Samaria and end of the Kingdom of Israel.		

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1915

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

A Backward and a Forward Look. "How the International Lessons are Prepared" was on the program at the Zürich convention. "I don't care anything about that topic", a teacher remarked to me, "for I am interested only in the Graded Lessons." "Who selects the Graded Lessons?" I inquired. "Wh—y, I never thought", came the answer. Evidently to her mind the Graded System of Lessons, like the Koran to the Mohammedans, had originated in heaven and been brought to earth by the angel Gabriel.

The International Lesson Committee finds the lesson texts—whether Uniform or Graded—in the Bible, and they give a vast amount of thought to the consideration of what portions are best adapted for the purpose, what Golden Texts shall emphasize the thought of each lesson, and what Scripture shall be read or memorized. The Sunday-school world criticises the Committee's selections freely, for where there are many minds there are many opinions.

How difficult it is to live down a poor reputation, to convince the public that what was once wrong has since been righted, is exemplified in the criticisms upon the Uniform Lessons. Time was when this series deserved censure for its lack of continuity, its failure to present whole Books of the Bible in one year, so that connected history might be learned and a knowledge of the Books as wholes be gained, but such censure it has not merited for years past. If any one is teaching the lessons as separate, unrelated events, it is not the fault of the Lesson Committee nor of the lesson helps.

In the year 1913 our course covered the Hexateuch—The Creation, the lives of the Patriarchs, the Bondage in Egypt, the Exodus and the Wilderness Wanderings, and the Conquest of Canaan. We began at the very cradle of the world's infancy and learned the inspired writer's conception of the beginning of things; saw the beginning of sin and the results of sin; learned how Abraham came to Canaan and lived as a friend of God; how Isaac led his uneventful life; how Jacob the trickster became the prince with God; and how nobly Joseph lived and wrought in Egypt; we followed the career of Moses as he worked for and with God; and with Joshua, the courageous-hearted, we entered the long-promised land and saw it divided among the twelve tribes.

"And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua"; thus begins the first verse of our first lesson of this year's course. We continue the history of the Chosen People through the rude, troublous times of the judges when the Israelites were at strife with the Canaanites and were gaining possession of the land; the establishment of the monarchy by Samuel with Saul as the first king; the welding of the tribes into one nation under David, poet, warrior

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and statesman; the increase of wealth and splendor under Solomon; the dividing of the national life into two separate historical currents under his son Rehoboam; and the varying fortunes of the kingdoms of Judea and Israel until the Northern Kingdom was carried away captive to Assyria.

And through all this history we find ourselves touching at many points the history of other nations. The Israelites were not shut off by themselves, they lay in the direct pathway between two great and powerful nations, Egypt on the one hand and Assyria on the other, and into their strifes and jealousies these little Palestinian kingdoms were drawn.

Our year's course, moreover, includes several beautiful Psalms which befit the experiences of David, and many lessons from the lives of the prophets Elijah and Elisha; we learn about the political, social and religious conditions of the times of the kings through the prophets Amos and Hosea; and are introduced to the missionary prophet Jonah, and the steadfast, immovable Daniel. We learn through the prophets that they had a land question and a liquor question in those ancient days, that there was too much greed and luxury at one end of the scale and too much grinding poverty at the other, and that dishonesty in the market place and laziness and extravagance in the home prevailed.

"Writ large" in these Old Testament Lessons are moral and spiritual lessons so simple that primary pupils can understand them, and instruction in the Divine method of educating and governing the world so profound that only the wisest will try to grasp it. Through them all there is a wonderful atmosphere of intense belief in a personal God.

How to Teach Old Testament Lessons. We start with a strong conviction of the permanent religious worth of the Old Testament as a revelation of the working of the all-sovereign God in the government of the world, and especially of its great character-forming value as a subject for Sunday-school instruction.

But there are certain facts which every teacher must face in teaching the Old Testament. Much of it is of a relative and temporary character; much of it cannot be taken as a standard of faith or morals without being corrected by the fuller light of the New Testament. Its greatness and its limitation alike must be recognized. The truths which the New Testament reveals in fuller clearness are found in the Old in elementary form. As a mother talks to her babe before he even hears her voice, and continues for a long time while he does not know what she says, content that he will come by degrees to an understanding of the meaning of her words, so God revealed himself to his Chosen People. We see clearly the progressiveness of his revelation in our year's course; it is a far cry from the crude religious beliefs of the Judges with which we begin to the deep knowledge of God and his righteousness disclosed by the prophets Amos and Hosea with which we end. In your teaching, often contrast the spirit of the Old and the New Testaments, point out the limitations of the men and women of the Old, and refer to the fuller revelation given in the gospels. Keep Christ's word in the minds of your scholars. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil . . . It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you."

Truths taught in the New Testament directly, doctrinally, through precept, are taught in the Old Testament indirectly, pictorially, through example. Do not make the mistake of treating literally what is written figuratively, of handling poetry as though it were prose. All the more fascinating is the reading because of this oriental fondness for clothing alike the commonplace happenings and the great historic events in picturesque language wholly different from that in which we report events in this prosaic age, with no eyes for the miracles that are daily with us. You will recall how in one of the lessons of the year that is just closed, Jesus bade his disciples beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and those literalists said one to another, "It is because we have no bread." Take heed.

There are difficulties of interpretation in some of these lessons, but one clear rule you will follow: the emphasis is to be placed upon what is really important, and what is of secondary value may be passed lightly by. Your enforcement of the moral and spiritual lesson truths need not lack in power merely because you can not decide exactly how you think the writers intended certain words to be understood. The Rev. J. Stuart Holden made a wise and

happy remark when he said in a recent address: "Beware lest, in seeking to fathom a mystery, you miss the music." Missing the music is what you are in danger of doing if you dwell too much upon the critical and theological problems, and too little upon the voice of God in these Old Testament Books.

The Teacher's Opportunity and Duty. A popular lecturer whom I engaged to speak before a Club of which I am a member, said to me just as she was going to the platform, "Oh, tell me, please, what is my theme—I forgot to refer to my engagement book as I was starting." Lecturers who have a dozen themes or less may perhaps safely trust to their fund of ideas and the spur of the moment, but such trust is not for Sunday-school teachers. You can not successfully stir up in your mind whatever recollection of the Bible passage you may happen to possess at the hour of teaching. No lesson can ever go home to the heart of a pupil which has not first gripped the heart of the teacher. No teacher can teach the Bible with power who has not first studied the Bible with diligence. No one can be a workman needing not to be ashamed who has not put his best efforts into preparation for his work.

Be sure that you know your lesson adequately and correctly. If your knowledge of it is hazy, your interest in it half-hearted and perfunctory, what wonder that your pupils' attention wanders, that your schools are not overflowing with life and power? They are not naturally the dull, lifeless listeners that we sometimes see there, these boys and girls, these men and women. They are keenly alive when they are listening to what is worth their while.

Study for information and for inspiration. If once you knew this portion of the Old Testament well, perhaps now you do not know it even fairly well. Progress in theological thought, in interpretation of the Bible, has been almost as great as in science or in medicine. Archæological discoveries which throw light upon the sacred page come so fast that Professor Petrie, the eminent archæologist, declares just to keep thoroughly abreast of them all would leave him time for nothing else.

These beautiful words of Dr. Van Dyke have become very familiar to you. Change the word Life to Teaching and feel their force!

> Life is an arrow—therefore you must know
> What mark to aim at, how to use the bow—
> Then draw it to the head, and let it go!

Filled with this sense of urgency in your work, you will never be guilty of drifting through a lesson period when you ought to be steering; you will never be "out on the ocean sailing" and letting the winds and tides carry you where they will; you will shape your course skilfully across the seas whether with the wind or against it. But to do this you must pay the price. You must be willing to work hard, to prepare yourself thoroughly, to put yourself heartily into your teaching.

For three days a lawyer had argued his client's case. His brief was a masterpiece of classical learning and erudition. Then the weary judge asked him to condense. "Your honor", exclaimed the attorney, "for the next four days my brief is a perfect marvel of condensation." Some teachers are like that lawyer: their flow of thoughts and of words is too abundant for the time limit. An outline of what you purpose teaching is necessary for conciseness, clearness, oneness, definiteness, progressiveness and impressiveness. Write out your outline and memorize it, then follow it in class. A jumble of thoughts thrown together haphazard does not have character-forming value any more than does a mass of bricks thrown together have a home-forming value.

Before beginning to teach any Book of the Bible, make yourself familiar with its aim and scope. The Bible consists of many Books which cover different periods in the development of the Chosen People of God. Every period has its own special conditions and every Book has its own special message. Moreover, the Books are not arranged in the Bible in chronological order. A Sunday-school teacher was greatly puzzled in reading the Old Testament through to find in the Books of Chronicles narratives which he remembered having read in the Books of Samuel and Kings, and then later on in the Prophetic Books to come across references to the same kings and events of which he had read in the earlier Books. A teacher will be saved much confusion of mind when he learns the fact that the whole history of the

Israelites from Abraham to the return from the Captivity is recorded in the Books of Genesis through Nehemiah (Leviticus being concerned only with worship and ceremonialism, Deuteronomy being a summary of the history and legislation recorded in the four earlier Books, and Chronicles repeating history recorded in the Books of Samuel and Kings), and then that the remainder of the Old Testament—the poetical and prophetical Books—belongs chronologically somewhere in those first historical Books of Genesis—Nehemiah.

As we take up the study of several books whose history covers the period from the time of Joshua to the Fall of Samaria, read and master all the information given about them in this *Guide*, pp. 25-54. Just as you study the entire lesson assigned each week, not merely the printed verses, so you will, of course, read the entire Book under consideration, not merely the assigned lessons. As you read, seek to gain the power of historical imagination, the power to reconstruct the dead realms of the past and to repeople them with moving life, for, in Dr. Jowett's forceful words, "We shall never grip the old-world message until we can re-create the old-world life."

From adult pupils and those who have attained the history stage in the day-schools, expect a connected knowledge of the history and of the Books. And remember that if this knowledge is to survive, it must be often revived. The review questions given each week under "The Historical Background" are for this purpose.

For Primary Teachers. The stories this year are captivating ones for your pupils. Practice telling them aloud till you can tell them simply, vividly, winsomely. Let what is evil appear in its true character and let what is good shine through the story, and your telling will impress the one great truth which each story has for your class.

There are only five lessons this year which are not stories. Even from these your pupils can learn one of the three great truths which stand out so prominently in the year's course—that this is God's world, that we are his children, and that without him we can come to no good. In "A Little Child and Her Religion," Miss Marion Thomas draws a beautiful picture. It was the twilight hour and a father, mother and child had been watching the sunset colors fade from the sky, and the stars glimmering forth one by one. When the sky was bright with stars, the mother said to the child, "The stars are beautiful, are they not? They are the heavenly Father's stars and yours and mine. I think he has made them to give us joy and to help us think of him." And then the father secured a light and opening the Bible began to read:

> The heavens declare the glory of God;
> And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
> Day unto day uttereth speech,
> And night unto night showeth knowledge.

The child did not fully understand, but she was thrilled by the words, and gained a sense of the greatness and power of God. Your pupils will not fully understand all the meaning of these strong words from the twenty-fourth Psalm, which is one of our lessons:

> Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?
> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
> Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,

but they are open to the influence of their rhythmical beauty and through them they will gain an insight into the majesty of God and into their relation to him.

The little child is naturally religious. In all your teaching do not lose this faith, even though you may have a class in a mission school where no signs of the "trailing clouds of glory" seem to have lingered with your pupils. The little child is not troubled with doubts: never suggest any to him. It is easy for him to believe in God: take this for granted. It is easy for him to love God: represent God to him as a loving Father who cares for his children. His eyes are easily opened to spiritual truths: help him to gain the true vision.

In these stories you have an opportunity to sow the seeds of faith in God and of love for the Heavenly Father who will keep his child in all his ways.

"A teacher plus a piece of chalk is two teachers", is the striking way in which a Sunday-school specialist lays stress upon blackboard work. You have no surer method at your command for holding the attention of your pupils than by blackboard illustrations sketched as you proceed with your lesson story. Not every primary teacher is an artist, but there is no primary teacher who can not use chalk to good advantage. The skill needed is not that of drawing beautiful pictures, but that of sketching common objects quickly. Let them be simple and crude. The third and fourth lessons you will find illustrated for you. Our artist has not made the mere outline sketches I purposed giving you, but they will serve the purpose, for you can draw them rapidly, with only a few strokes of the chalk, not stopping to put in the fine lines, letting straight lines represent the people by the tent, etc. If a lesson does not admit of blackboard illustration, then write on the board important words or sentences which will help to impress the truth you are teaching. In each review lesson there is a page of simple outline pictures, one for each lesson. They will not lose their review interest for your pupils if you draw them week by week.

For Junior Teachers. It was a college student who looked up with surprise when a Professor of History referred to the road which Solomon built, and exclaimed: "Do you mean to tell me that Solomon was a real person? I always thought he was just somebody in the Bible." And it is a commonplace to hear adults recall the time when they failed to realize that the Bible country is a part of the world in which they lived. In one of our large cities an art museum is close by a zoölogical garden. A cultivated woman who lectures at the art museum was complaining one day about the attitude of the children sent to her. "I have a beautiful lecture on Velasquez," she said, "and here are copies of his wonderful paintings, but the children will not listen—they are so crazy to get out and go over to see the animals." Children are like that. They prefer real live things every time, they like what has action; next they like things that we cause to move; and far down in the scale of their appreciation come flat things like paintings. Do not let these lessons appear to them like a series of beautiful paintings. Make Deborah and Gideon and Samson, Ruth and Samuel and Saul, David and Solomon, Jeroboam and Joash—all the Bible characters of our year's course so intensely real that your pupils will never think of them otherwise than as living men and women, boys and girls, through whom God taught the world his great lessons. They will delight in these stories of brave adventures and heroic deeds of very human heroes and heroines.

Make the land real by using, not only outline maps of all or parts of Palestine, but maps of the world and globes which connect Palestine with the United States, and facts of the Bible with facts of the world learned at school. Your pupils like to draw maps, and a part of their work should be to make outline maps of the Plain of Esdraelon and locate the places as they are mentioned in the early lessons, then a map of Palestine on which they locate the places connected with Samuel's life, and so on. These maps may be made upon sheets of paper similar in size to other sheets upon which they paste penny pictures, or pictures cut from their quarterlies illlustrating the lessons, and yet other sheets on which with plain or fanciful lettering, ink or crayons or watercolors, they write the Lesson Topic and Golden Text and a special thought learned. The sheets for each quarter's lessons (two pages for each lesson plus the pages of maps) they can fasten between decorated covers.

Of course your pupils bring their Bibles, not their quarterlies, to class. Make them very familiar this year with the position in the Bible of the eight historical, the one poetical and the four prophetical Books of the course, able to turn quickly to the lesson, and to find the great passages or verses of each Book. Occasionally throughout the year ask them to turn to earlier Books studied, to find the story of Gideon, the account of Ruth's loyal words, etc.

Yet mere Bible knowledge has no dynamic power, and your work is not so much the teaching of Bible history or geography or even of religion as it is the endearing of religion. "We live by admiration." Whatever captures your

pupils' minds and fills them with wonder and admiration, has character-forming value, for it educates them, draws them out into its likeness. By the Bible stories the child's judgment concerning the noble and the base, the right and the wrong, are trained, and he is led to make far-reaching decisions for himself, decisions which will lead to the Great Decision, to attain which is the aim of all your teaching.

Keep in mind that it is not your province so much to explain as it is to lead your pupils to see. Possibly you need to be on your guard lest you yourself talk too much, and do not let your pupils talk enough. In order to deepen an impression you must secure expression. Juniors love to talk and explain things, and doing this fastens the subject in mind and arouses to right action. There is a home where in the early evening the mother has the two youngest children read and explain to her their school lessons for the next day, with seldom a word or comment from her, and then the two older ones come with their books and take turns in reading aloud and talking things over. The day-school teachers say that these young people have a greater interest in their lessons, a readier grasp of the meaning of the books, and a clearer expression of the thoughts in their own words, than the other pupils. Do not deprive your pupils of a similar opportunity to become interested in the Bible lessons, to understand them, and to make them a power in their lives.

Be clear yourself, in all that you teach. Crystallize truths, rather than hold them in solution.

For Intermediate Pupils. In that remarkable book, "The Promised Land", Mary Antin has written her life history, and in the Introduction she declares that her life has been unusual, but by no means unique. "It is because I understand my history, in its larger outlines, to be typical of many, that I consider it worth recording. Although I have written a genuine personal memoir, I believe that its chief interest lies in the fact that it is illustrative of scores of unwritten lives." How well her words apply to the lives of the Old Testament characters, for unusual as they are, their experiences with God and his laws are illustrated in the lives of your own pupils. The best training in morality and religion is by the unconscious or the semi-conscious method. Don't preach. Boys and girls can sit through a great amount of preaching and be as immune to its effect as was the lad who was taking algebra, but really, as his teacher explained, "was only exposed to it three times a week, he could not be said to be taking it yet."

Not very long ago the grade crossing had been abolished in a New England city, and on either side of the road through the most beautiful part of the town ran a huge yellow sandbank. A public-spirited citizen figured out what it would cost to plant the sandbanks with trees and shrubs and sent his estimate to the railway company, courteously asking them to consider changing it to a thing of beauty. A railway official at once replied that the company would not do it. The citizen was not angered; instead, he began to reflect. Probably the fault was his own—he had failed to make the matter plain to the company. His deliberation suggested another way of doing it. He had a long panorama of the yellow sandbanks photographed in all their naked ugliness. Then on another long roll of paper he had a landscape gardener picture them as they would look when planted with trees and shrubs; on the bottom was an estimate of cost. The two rolls he then sent to the railway company without comment. The day after he received a letter from the same official, thanking him for his suggestion and promising to have the yellow sandbanks transformed at once.

Your pupils, some of them, are leading lives of dreary barrenness, perchance even of ugly wickedness. You may ask them to change their lives and make them beautiful to all beholders, and your words may fall on indifferent ears. Is it not partly because they do not realize what a beautiful life is? Throughout the year show them as in a long panorama the life you covet for them—the beauty of unselfish devotion as exemplified in Ruth, the blessedness of perfect trust in God as shown in the twenty-third Psalm, the excellence of upright dealing as seen in the men who repaired the Temple under Joash.

It is in your Grade that talkative Juniors so often change into dumb Intermediates, that boys and girls who formerly studied their lessons now refuse to look at them during the week. Do not permit this metamorphosis, O first year Intermediate teachers: take it as a matter of course that they will con-

tinue to study their lessons and give them something to do which befits their powers and interests.

The Charge of the Light Brigade was being exhibited at a moving picture show. Eager questions rained upon one who was surrounded by a crowd of girls from the High School. "Tell me, who fought with whom, and when was it, do tell me quick." "Did you not learn all about it in your school history?" they were asked. "O yes, I suppose so, but I never cared then. Now I must know." They were told where to look for the story, and it was the first thing that each one did on reaching home. Make your pupils care to know about Biblical history, arouse in them something of such eagerness to find how it all came about and when and where. Your pupils hold with Longfellow who declared that of all kinds of history he liked biography the best, the story of how men accomplish their task in the world. You might suggest this for the title page of the biographies which they will write in their note-books this year—"How God's Chosen People accomplished their Task in the World from the Twelfth through the Eighth Century, B.C." Beneath the title let them write this quotation, "All history is the lengthened shadows of great men." As they write the biography of each great character from this point of view, they can not fail to be impressed by the way he failed to do God's will and so reaped just retribution, or by the way

"He knew God's Word, he did his will,
His mem'ry fires our actions still!"

Give your pupils some of the questions to look up in the Bible which are called for under the "Work to be Assigned for the Next Lesson." One teacher who has been giving each Intermediate pupil only one of the questions each week was told by a pupil that through these questions she had read more in the Bible and had learned more about it than in any other year in her life. Don't burden pupils with too many questions, nor with those outside their interests. Among the "Questions to think about" you will find some for your class, and if you give them out in advance, this will insure your having a profitable discussion in class. Helen Keller made a severe arraignment of the adult mind when she wrote in a letter to *The Outlook*: "I have the advantage of a mind trained to think. In most people I talk with thought is infantile. In the well educated it is rare. In time their minds become automatic machines. People do not like to think. If one thinks, one must reach conclusions, and conclusions are not always pleasant." It is for the sake of the conclusions your pupils will reach more than for the excellent mental training, that you will give them these questions to think about and will call for their thoughts the week following.

You may find it profitable to do what many teachers are doing, lending a copy of this *Guide* each week to a different scholar, and asking him to read what is here given under one of the three topics, and come prepared to give one of the illustrations which enforces that lesson truth. Pupils who will not take part in a lesson discussion which involves an expression of opinion will do this readily, and later they become eager to tell their own thoughts as well.

Correlate your work with that of the day-schools. Find out what your pupils know; possibly you will be surprised at the extent of their general knowledge. They like to make use of this fund of information. Give them an opportunity to do this in class, wherever it bears upon the lesson topic, and their tongues will readily unloose. The more your pupils contribute to the lesson hour, the more they will gain from it.

Your pupils have reached the age when to be counted useful and to be trusted gives them the keenest satisfaction. Find tasks for them to do, expect them to do them, encourage them in the doing.

For Senior Teachers. Like everyone else, I have always known about Greatheart and Apollyon and Vanity Fair and the City of Destruction, and I have always supposed that I was quite familiar with "Pilgrim's Progress", till the other day I saw a reference to "the Town of Stupidity" and it awakened no thought of Bunyan's masterpiece. I read on and learned that it lay only four degrees north of the City of Destruction. Then I meditated for a moment and realized that I had only been assuming that I had read "Pilgrim's Progress" because I had so often read excerpts from it. I had never read

the book as a whole, and could not tell its story. Perhaps few of you need make this same confession, yet the number of things of which all of us know a little—and that little mostly wrong—is beyond our reckoning.

Many senior grade pupils are just as unaware of their ignorance about the Bible. Why not test your class at the beginning of the year as to the correctness of their knowledge of the Books which we are to study together? Dr. James McConaughy, who says he has quite unintentionally qualified as an expert on the subject of Bible ignorance, as far as young men of our day are concerned, having given Bible examinations two and three times a year for twenty years to entering students at Mount Hermon School, had these questions in a recent list "requiring only some general knowledge of the most important Bible facts":

Tell for each of five Old Testament historical books the name of any one person mentioned in it and one fact about that person. What did Samuel do for the Israelites? What did Elijah do for them? Tell about Gideon's army. Tell about Eli and his sons. Tell about David and Absalom.

Put these questions to your pupils, and if their knowledge proves hazy, awaken in them a great desire to know such facts correctly and to learn the great life lessons of these Old Testament characters. Induce them to study their Bibles this year in the mental state that Charles Reade, the novelist, did at the suggestion of Sir Edwin Arnold—as if it were a wholly new book to them. Mr. John Morley reminds us that it is a great mistake to think that, because we have read a masterpiece once, twice, or ten times, therefore we have done with it. Because it is a masterpiece, we ought to live with it, and make it part of our daily life. If this is true of the "world's best literature", how much truer it is of the Word of God!

We are wont to say that the child must behold religion in the concrete, that a truth is destitute of meaning for him until he sees it portrayed in the life of some person. But how about the average mind of a senior grade pupil —or even of an adult—does it not prefer concrete to abstract? A magazine which has just come from the press has a story in which occurs this dialogue between Frohman and a would-be playwright:

"One play I call 'The Vision'—this is a Brotherhood of Man play—the other I call 'Peace' and it's a dramatization of the Universal Peace idea."

"Why don't you write something human? Nobody wants dramatized movements. The public wants people, personalities, things we all know and feel. You can't get much thrill out of Universal Peace!"

"But I believe the public should be taught—"

"Yes, I know. Teach them all you like, but learn your trade so thoroughly that they will have no idea they are being taught. That is the function of the artist-playwright."

And is it not the function of the artist-teacher, for such he must be who would hold and influence the young men and women of today? Story telling has character-value here as well as in the earlier grades.

Encourage your pupils to discuss parallels between the experiences related in the Hebrew history and those in English history; lead them to appreciate the Bible as literature, to compare English War songs with the Song of Deborah, for example, or Tennyson's Dora with the story of Ruth. If you have a class of educated young people who have lost their interest in the interpretation of the Bible, such study will restore it. "The Literary Study of Historical, Poetical and Prophetical Books of the Old Testament," might be their Note-Book work for the year. Let them gain a thorough knowledge of the Books, their date, the circumstances in which they were written, the times reflected in their words, their purpose, their lessons for today. All this they should find of absorbing interest.

Bishop Edwin S. Lines, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, called attention recently to the decline in civic virtue shown by the descendants of what might be called the old stock of Americans, and said: "Among our worst citizens, who let things go badly in our State and communities because they will not take time and trouble to fight against public corruption, are an unusual number of representatives of the old families. There seems to be a disposition on their part to make themselves comfortable and to neglect their public duties. If the new generation of young men and young women are going to live upon the

generation before, without exertion, without sense of responsibility, they will be displaced by the children of the newcomers, to whom the future of the country will belong. It is better to stir up this new generation, which desires ease and luxurious living, freedom from exertion, than to spend our time in anxiety over what the newcomers will do to us." May not your young people lay these words to heart, as they see the result of public corruption and of the love of ease and luxurious living in the Kingdom of Israel?

The special appeal which these lessons should make to your young people I give in the words of Dr. Lyman Abbott to "An Unknown Friend"; they might have been written for this very purpose. "It is their privilege and duty to know that the Creator of the Universe is also the Ruler of men, and that he is not only a Ruler but also a Friend and Helper; that he is One who inspires us with high ideals of life, and who, when we fall into evil ways, helps us to recover ourselves and return unto ways of righteousness: that it is a privilege and duty in loyal love to him to work with him to inspire others with high ideals and to help others when they fall into evil ways, if they are willing to accept our help, to get back into ways of right living."

For Adult Class Teachers. There are not wanting many who say: "Never mind about the sins and virtues of the ancient Israelite; talk about the sins and virtues of this day and generation." But the wonderful thing is, they are much the same now as then. In these Old Testament Books we see some aspects of our own generation as in a mirror, for though civilization advances and life becomes fuller and more complex, man still thinks and feels and acts the same. There is a French proverb which says, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose"—The more it is changed, the more it remains the same thing. Phillips Brooks expressed our attitude toward the Old Testament when he said: "What we want is not to let the wonderful history of that ancient people go, but rather to study it far more deeply and wisely. We want to save our present life from being a poor, extemporized thing by seeing how God was teaching lessons for this age of ours and for every age, centuries ago. Never was there a history in which God's working was so manifest, never was there a nation whose evil and whose good was so suggestive. We cannot know how much flatter, vulgarer, and tamer these halls of our common humanity would seem if they no longer felt the tread and echoed to the voices of the giants of the Old Testament—Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah."

There are two ways at your command for giving freshness to your teaching this year. One is such a new way of putting things as will awaken an indifferent member of your class and arouse his zest for your theme. By this I do not mean that a Bible Class is the place for beautiful phrase-making. The greater the velocity of a cannon ball, the nearer a straight line will be its course. Direct, forceful language, which is not hackneyed, which views a subject from an unusual angle, always is effective. I have been told that when an old professor at a famous university rebuked a student for not coming regularly to class and taking notes as his father had done, the student replied that he did not need to come because he had his father's notes! It is an old, old Book that you will teach this year, but you need never teach it in an old, old way.

The second way to give freshness to your leadership is that which Coleridge said was a sure way for any old truth—the regarding it in the light of present-day events. Read your newspaper and periodicals, listen to lectures and conversations, with the members of your class in mind. Dr. Jowett's plan in preparing a sermon may well be yours. "When I have my theme clearly defined, and I begin to prepare its exposition", he writes, "I keep in the circle of my mind at least a dozen men and women, very varied in their natural temperaments, and very dissimilar in their daily circumstances. (Just such a class have you.) They are real men and women whom I know: professional people, trading people, learned and ignorant, rich and poor. When I am preparing my work, my mind is constantly glancing round this invisible circle, and I consider how I can so serve the bread of this particular truth as to provide welcome nutriment for all. What relation has this teaching to that barrister? How can the truth be related to that doctor? What have I here for that keenly nervous man with the artistic temperament? And there is that poor body upon whom the floods of sorrow have been rolling their billows for many years—what about her? And so on all round the circle . . . . It does

this for me—in all my preparation it keeps me in actual touch with life, with real men and women, moving in the common streets . . . . Our messages must be related to life, to lives, and we must make everybody feel that our key fits the lock of his own private door."

A writer in a current denominational monthly makes this surprising statement: "Our Sunday-school lessons have sinned gravely in pettiness. I have no doubt that a large part of the disrespect into which the Sunday-school has fallen among adults is due to the fact that so many of the lessons, composed of only a few verses, contain too little matter to command the serious attention of an adult class." There never was a time when the Sunday-school was held in greater respect by adults than now, never a time when adult class membership was increasing by leaps and bounds, as it is doing today, and the leader's difficulty is not that there is too little matter in the section to fill the lesson period worthily, but that there are too many topics and questions growing naturally out of it and so little time available for their profitable discussion. Do not touch upon them all; rather limit yourself to one main message and mission of each lesson.

A one-man-class or a one-woman-class is a failure. Don't have a passive class; have an active one. Don't have subscribers to your opinions; have contributors of other opinions. Don't merely have a class of scholars; have a group of workers.

Not the least nor the easiest of your responsibilities is that of making your members leaders in every noble cause, the terrors of evil-doers in municipal and national life. What is your class doing outside the class-room for the help of others? An adult class should be a force in the church and community, and should reach out in ever widening circles, to the State, the country, and the whole world. A pastor of a church which recently carried through an "Every-one-at-Church Campaign" which resulted in crowding the church and adding nearly a hundred to its membership, gives the following among many things which he learned by the campaign. "The importance of having something definite in church work. It may be all right to 'shoot an arrow in the air', but it is better to shoot it at a mark. Next, the perfect willingness of men and women to work if given something worth while to work at. Of the twenty-two leaders, most had never been on any church committee before."

Are your members studying the economic, social and moral conditions of your town or village? Have you a large foreign population, and is anything being done for their welfare? Are there questions of housing and sanitation and education and recreation with which they can grapple? Are conditions satisfactory at hospitals and asylums and jails? Are the sick visited, the strangers welcomed, the out-of-work helped? In a Massachusetts town the Protestant churches together have furnished rooms for basketball and other games to keep the boys off the streets. A Rhode Island brotherhood is using the moving picture machine very effectively to teach patriotism to its foreign population. What special work will your class carry through this year?

THE BOOKS IN THE COURSE

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Title. The full title—The Book of the Judges—is found in the Syriac Version. The Book is so called because it recounts the deeds of those early leaders of Israel who were raised up from time to time to save their people from annihilation at the hands of foes.

These leaders were not judges in the sense that we use the title: they were rather occasional champions, deliverers, dictators. The judges were principally leaders in warfare; after peace was attained, they are said to have "judged Israel" for a number of years, but we are told nothing about the extent or nature of their authority. The title indicates that the ruler was not regal, yet that he was higher than the mere head of the tribe or the mere judge of special cases. Dean Stanley explains that *Shophet,* the Hebrew word which we translate Judge, is the same as we find in the *Suffes* of the Carthaginian rulers at the time of the Punic Wars, and as afterward the office of King was taken from the nations round about, so now, if not the office, at least the name of Judge, or *Shophet,* seems to have been drawn from the Canaanite cities, with which for the first time Israel came into contact. It is the first trace of the influence of the Syrian usages on the fortunes of the Chosen People.

Authorship and Date. The Book is a collection of ancient records. The formal framework repeated with the story of each judge (see the outline, below) is the wording of the one who incorporated in one Book the grand old stories of the early heroes which had been told by father to son for generations in Canaan. Four times we read that "in those days there was no king in Israel": evidently, then, the collection was made at the later time when there were kings in Israel. Whoever the compiler was, he had a mighty faith in God as the Maker of history.

The chronology of the Book is obscure. It gives the duration of the various judgeships and united they make four hundred and ten years, but their times probably overlapped, each judge ruling in his district only. The round numbers given for each of the greater judges (40, 80, 40, 40, 20) probably were not intended to be exact, since the sum total does not agree with the statement in 1 K. 6. 1, which assigns 480 years to the entire period between the Exodus and the building of the Temple.

Our ideas of chronological exactness were unknown in those ancient times. They are still uncommon among oriental peoples. A French statistician wrote recently to the vali of Aleppo and asked these four questions: "What are the imports of Aleppo? What is the water supply? What is the birth-rate? The death-rate?" The vali replied: "It is impossible for anyone to know the number of camels that kneel in the markets of Aleppo. The water supply is sufficient: no one ever died of thirst in Aleppo. The mind of Allah alone knows how many children shall be born in this vast city at any given time. As to the death-rate, who would venture to ascertain this, for it is revealed only to the angels of death who shall be taken and who shall be left. O Son of the West, cease your idle and presumptuous questionings, and know that these things are not revealed to the children of men."

The Exodus (forty years before the entrance into Canaan under Joshua) is now dated about 1250 B. C. and the accession of David as king about 1017 B. C. The period covered by the Book of Judges may have been less than two centuries, perhaps a century and a half.

The Times. In the Book of Joshua we are told about the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, the first stages in their conquest of the land, the allotment of territory among the five tribes, and Joshua's farewell address.

The Book of Judges gives the history of the Israelites from the last days of Joshua through the last days of Samson, that free, wild, stirring, pioneer period during which the foundations for the future nation were being laid.

At the beginning of the history we find the Israelites living with their enemies, the Canaanites, in a half conquered land. Like Bedouin robbers, the Canaanites made frequent sallies into Israelite territory, and the Israelites lived in constant expectation of attack. Moses and Joshua had been great enough to hold the tribes together, but now the tribes were scattered, there was no central government, and there were no real leaders much of the time. As a rule, each tribe waged its own warfare with the native inhabitants. Jealousy was rife among the tribes, and nothing like concerted action among them is seen save in the great crisis which called forth Deborah and Barak. It was a rude age this, whose lawlessness is especially seen in the closing chapters of the Book, a time when "there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

The Israelites were desert nomads when they entered the land of Canaan, and during the time of the Judges they were not only making themselves masters of the land but they were learning from their Canaanite neighbors the arts of agricultural life, and they were gradually working toward tribal consolidation. At the same time the religion as well as morals of the Canaanites entered into the life of Israel, for it was at this period that the Israelites were introduced to the old sanctuaries and sacred places of Canaan, and learned the corrupting forms of worship of the Baal, the Canaanite gods.

Contents of the Book. The Book of Judges falls naturally into three divisions, an introductory section, the body of the Book, and an appendix.

The Introduction duplicates, in general, the statements that are scattered through Joshua 15, 16, 17 and 19, events which occurred during Joshua's lifetime, the introductory clause "and it came to pass after the death of Joshua" being added probably by a later hand to connect the two books: moreover, 2.6-10 is an account of the death of Joshua, duplicating Joshua 24.29-33.

The body of the Book narrates the deeds of the Judges, and this is the outline of each story: sin, punishment, appeal, deliverance, peace; sin, punishment, appeal, deliverance, peace. Apostasy, disobedience to Jehovah, is followed by oppression, subjection to enemies; a shallow repentance ensues and a judge is raised up to deliver the people and secure peace for a number of years, until they again worship the gods of their heathen neighbors.

The stories in the Appendix refer to an earlier period than the close of section II, one of the characters mentioned being a grandson of Moses and another of Aaron.

The Outline.

I. Introduction, 1. 1-3. 6.
   1. Victories of Judah (Caleb their leader), Simeon and Joseph 1. 1-28.
   2. Districts which Israel was not able to conquer, and the reason therefor, 1.27-2.5.
   3. Retrospect: allegiance to Jehovah under Joshua and his death, 2.6-10.
   4. Preview: an epitome of the period of the judges, 2.11-19.
   5. List of the nations left to prove Israel, 2.20-3.6.

II. Stories of the Judges, 3.7-16.31.
   1. Apostasy, punishment at the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, deliverance under Othniel as Judge, 3.7-11.
   2. Apostasy, punishment at the hands of the King of Moab, deliverance under Ehud as Judge, 3.12-30; Shangar, 31.
   3. Apostasy, punishment at the hands of Jabin, King of Canaan, and Sisera, his captain, and deliverance under Deborah as Judge and Barak as captain, Chapters 4 and 5.
      a. Song of Deborah, Chapter 5.
   4. Apostasy, punishment at the hands of the Midianites, and deliverance under Gideon as Judge, 6.1-8.32.
      a. The sign of the fleece, 6.33-40; b. The choice of the three hundred, 7.1-8; c. The cake of barley bread, 7.9-14; d. Trumpets and pitchers, 7.15-22.

5. Apostasy, punishment from within at the hands of Abimelech; death of Abimelech; later deliverance under Tola, Jair, 8.33-10.5.
   a. Jotham's fable, 9.7-20.
6. Apostasy, punishment at the hands of the Ammonites, deliverance under Jephthah, and successors—Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, 10.6-12.15.
   a. Jephthah's vow, 11.30-40.
7. Apostasy, punishment at the hands of the Philistines, "beginning" (13.5) of deliverance under Samson as Judge, Chapters 13-16.
   a. Samson's riddle, 14.5-20; b. His feat with the foxes, 15.1-8; c. His feat with new ropes, 15.9-14; d. His feat with the jawbone of an ass, 15.15-16; e. His feat with the gate of Gaza, 16.3; f. His death, 16.21-30.

III. Appendix, Chapters 17-21.
1. Micah and his idols, migration of the Danites and the establishment of the sanctuary at Dan, Chapters 17 and 18.
2. Feud between the tribes of Benjamin and the rest of the Israelites, Chapters 19-21.

As Literature. Intensely interesting are the vigorous stories, with their varied and thrilling scenes. The story of Gideon has been declared the equal in force and beauty of any episode in the epic poems of Greece. Then there is Ehud plunging his dagger into the unsuspicious king Eglon; the lion-hearted Deborah delivering her judgments beneath her palm tree; the great Sisera lying dead in Jael's tent, slain by the hand of a woman; the crowds of Ephraimites slain at the fords of the Jordan because they cannot say Shibboleth; Jephthah's daughter coming forth to meet her father with timbrel and dance, and striking agony into his heart; the grim humor and merry exploits of the giant Samson.

Dr. Lyman Abbott was once lecturing on political reform in one of our great cities. He took out his pocket Bible, remarking, "I have here an old book which is a favorite with me", and proceeded to read Jotham's Parable of the Trees from the Book of Judges.

Two gentlemen on the platform afterwards asked him what the book was from which he had read, and one of the men was a judge. Jotham's Parable and Deborah's Song—these are literary gems. Deborah's Song of Triumph is generally believed the oldest specimen of Hebrew poetry extant. It shows the vindictive, relentless spirit of primitive people, but it also breathes forth a passionate love for Israel and for Israel's God. It is one of the finest odes of the world's literature, beautiful in its impetuous style and its vivid imagery. From some of its passages Macaulay drew inspiration for his "Horatius."

Lessons for Today. Judges was written to illustrate and enforce spiritual truth rather than to record history. Although the rude life which the Israelites led was utterly different from our own, and their knowledge of the nature of God was far inferior to ours, their religious ideas being primitive and their morality low, yet the Book has many forceful lessons for us in these days of greater knowledge and great privilege.

It throws a lurid light upon the fearful conditions that exist when every man is a law unto himself, living with no regard to the Divine Ruler of men. There are two Golden Texts in our First Quarter's lessons which give two leading lessons from the Book. One of them is Prov. 14.34:

> Righteousness exalteth a nation;
> But sin is a reproach to any people.

Instead of "reproach" take here the root meaning of the Hebrew word, which is "bends the neck". Over and over again we see the apostasy of the people followed by their enslavement: sin bends their neck to a conqueror. "The punishment of God is poetic", writes Dr. Morgan. "That which fell upon these people was the necessary result of their own sin. They bent their neck to low ideals of religion, and were compelled to bend the neck to the rule of the people to whose immorality they had stooped. God visited them by bringing upon them the scourge of an idolatrous people, because they had stooped to idolatry." The warning is needed for nations now as

well as then: righteousness still exalts a nation and sin still brings it low.
The Golden Text which brings out the second dominant lesson is Ps. 34; 17:

> The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard,
> And delivered them out of their troubles.

God is not only just, he is also merciful, and ready to pardon. The punishment brought the people to a realization of their sin and of their need of God. "Jehovah is seen watching and waiting in mercy for his people, hearing them the moment they cry to him, and answering them immediately with deliverance. It is a story, on the human side, of disobedience and disaster, and on the Divine side of direction and deliverance."

Thus the two chief lessons of the Book may be summed up in one sentence: None should presume, for God is just; none need despair, for God is merciful. And there are many other lessons for us in the Book. God finds his co-workers in what we would deem unlikely places; he chooses men whom we would think unsuited to be his messengers; he finds the right man at the right moment; his is the guiding hand in history; religion, patriotism and national strength can not be disassociated; racial animosity and greed are punished; high courage and wonderful faith are needed.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The Title. The book derives its name from its heroine. It is one of the five short writings called by the Jews *Megilloth* or *Rolls,* and is fittingly read in their synagogues on the Feast of Pentecost, the great Harvest Festival of the Jewish Calendar. In the ancient editions of the Hebrew Scriptures it was always joined with the Book of Judges.

Authorship and Date. There is no hint in the Bible as to the author of this little Book, and the time to which its writing may be ascribed can only be conjectured. That it was written at a much later date than that of the events narrated is seen from the first verse, which tells us that the period of the Judges lay far behind, and from the explanations given of customs. Ruth 4.7 speaks of a practice as "the custom in former times in Israel", and the presupposition of the whole fourth chapter is that the customs there recorded had long been obsolete. The last verses were certainly written long after Ruth's death. It is an interesting supposition that the Book was written in the time of Ezra, as a protest against his rigorous measures demanding the divorce of all foreign wives, for Ruth the Moabitess becomes an Israelite indeed, with faith enough to adopt Israel's God as her God, and deemed by God worthy of being the ancestress of Israel's greatest king.

The events of the Book took place in the time of the Judges. Josephus places it in the time of Eli, the priest and judge whose story is given in the early chapters of First Samuel, doubtless from the fact that David was Ruth's great-grandson.

The appendix of Judges, chapters 17-21, illustrates the period of the Judges in its wild scenes of bloodshed; Ruth illustrates the period from a happy point of view, giving us a glimpse of the pastoral and domestic life, and having an office in the Bible, as Armstrong Blake says, "not unlike that which God has given the flowers in the world of nature; it softens, it sweetens, it soothes."

Contents. The story, which is told with so much charm and tenderness, is briefly this: Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, is driven by famine to settle in the land of Moab with his wife Naomi and their two sons. A few years pass, Elimelech dies, the two sons marry Ruth and Orphah, women of Moab, and the sons die. Naomi decides to return home, and Ruth resolves to accompany Naomi, leaving her own land and kin and clinging to the older woman with unselfish, true-hearted devotion. In Bethlehem Ruth gleans in the harvest fields, for Naomi is poor and she must obtain food for them both, and her piety wins the favor of God and of men. Boaz, the wealthy land owner in whose field she works, is a kinsman of Elimelech and Naomi devises a plan by which Boaz chooses Ruth for his wife. Ruth and Naomi

live happily with Boaz, and in becoming the ancestress of the great King David Ruth's fidelity receives a high reward.

The Outline.

I. The Great Choice, 1.1-18.
   1. Preliminary events, 1.1-5.
   2. Ruth's great choice, 1.6-18.
II. The Time of Poverty, 1.19-4.12.
   1. The Home-Coming in Bethlehem, 1.19-22.
   2. Ruth Gleaning in the Field of Boaz, Chapters 2 and 3.
   3. Boaz Redeeming Elimelech's Inheritance, 4.1-12.
III. The Time of Plenty, 4.13-22.
   1. Ruth Married to Boaz, and Birth of Obed, 4.13-17.
   2. Obed the Ancestor of David, 4.17-22.

As Literature. A great poet, when asked why he did not write a poem upon the story of Ruth, replied, "I dare not lest I mar that which is already perfect." That the Book of Ruth is a prose idyl unsurpassed in any literature is the judgment of all who are competent to judge the Book as literature. Goethe calls it "the loveliest little epic and idyllic whole which has ever come down to us," and a later critic says that "it is a wonderful prose poem, sweet, artless and persuasive, touched with the quaintness of an older world and fresh with the scent of the harvest fields." When Benjamin Franklin was our minister to France, he read the Book at a social gathering one evening; his hearers expressed their delight in its charming simplicity and eagerly inquired in what book this idyl could be found.

Lessons for Today. Love plays a great part in human life, and the love of Ruth for Naomi, and the love of Boaz for Ruth, "sets us a pattern how we ought to live." The constancy and heroism and unselfishness of one woman's love for another has no greater illustration in all literature than in Ruth's love for Naomi. Then the Book, like the Book of Jonah, claims the whole world for the love of God: it is not Ruth's birth, but her faith that counts. Matthew Henry gives as the lasting value of the book "its design to lead to Providence, to show us how conversant it is about our private concerns, and to teach us in them all to have eye to it, acknowledging God in all our ways and in all events that concern us."

Then what rich lessons there are for us here and now in Naomi's character —her loyalty to God through all her sorrows, which she bore without rebellion, her winsomeness that made Ruth want Naomi's God to be her God, her unselfishness in wishing her daughters-in-law to choose what seemed to be for their best interest: in Ruth's character—the strength of her affection for her mother-in-law, the unselfishness of her devotion to Naomi, the readiness of her decision to cleave unto Naomi until death and to follow Naomi's God, the persistence of her loyalty, the splendidness of her courage in facing the struggle of earning their living: and in Boaz's character—his kindly regard for the welfare of his laborers, his care for the stranger within his gates, the greatness and courtesy of his heart, his readiness to assume the responsibility of the next-of-kin, his loyalty to the law of his people.

And then there is the special lesson of the close of the book. I give it in Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's words: "The value to God of that life which makes the great surrender, and follows him in faith, the value of such a life can never be known until we pass within the veil. Remember the sequence with which this book closes; Obed, Jesse, David. Boaz and Ruth had passed into the light ere David came, the king for whom the nation was waiting, yet the sequence did not end with David. A little later a prophet from some height of vision broke into a great song. 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel'. Far down the centuries there shone a light at midnight, and songs were heard, and in the direct line of the man of Judah and of privilege, and the woman of Moab and of limitation, to Bethlehem came the King."

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS, AND CHRONICLES

Why we have Two Books Each of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. The last language at this writing into which the Bible has been translated is that of Dabida, one of the three dialects spoken in the Taita region of British East Africa. After the Four Gospels had been translated and printed, the Bible Society suggested having a new edition of the Four Gospels bound together. But, the translator explained: "We can not do them in one volume, as we have no appliances for book-binding." Thus is repeated today the experiences of the first Greek translators of these Old Testament Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. The earliest translation was the Septuagint Version, and for each of these historical books two scrolls were used where in the original Hebrew only one had been necessary, because written Greek requires far more space than written Hebrew, and the scrolls were of limited length. Our English Versions follow the Septuagint Version in dividing the Books, although now the only reason for doing so is for convenience of reference.

The Writers. The Books themselves give us no information in regard to the writers, although they mention an official recorder, or chronicler. The Books of Kings and Chronicles emphasize the fact that they are compilations by frequently referring to annals which have not come down to us. "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" is mentioned seventeen times, and "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah", is mentioned fifteen times. A "Book of the Acts of Solomon" is referred to in 1 K. 11.41; "the history of Jehu, the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the Kings of Israel", is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 20.34. These and yet other records mentioned as sources of information, or redactions from them, were the "original sources" used by the writers of our books of Kings and Chronicles. It is natural to suppose that Lives or Biographies of Elijah and Elisha furnished information in regard to these prophets, for "histories of Shemaiah, the Prophet, and of Iddo, the Seer" are referred to in 2 Chronicles 12.15.

In the Books of Samuel there is but one reference to other records (the Book of Jashar, 2 S. 1.18), yet the duplicate accounts of the same events—in First Samuel even three accounts of one event—accounts which are similar in the essential matters but are told in different words and usually in somewhat different settings, show that these books, too, are a compilation from several sources. Among these are the two accounts of David's magnanimity toward Saul, of David's sojourn among the Philistines and departure from them, and of the death of Saul. There are seeming contradictions, for example, several times the Book strongly insists that Samuel told the people of Israel they sinned against God in asking for a king, and yet another account says that Jehovah told Samuel whom he should choose for king and said, "He shall save my people out of the hands of the Philistines, for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me." Again one account declares that Saul was rejected because of his disobedience in regard to the Amalekites, and there is another account of his rejection because he offered sacrifice at Gilgal instead of waiting for Samuel. In one account concerning David's encounter with Goliath he has been sent by his father Jesse to the Israelite camp with food for his brothers and meets Saul for the first time, and yet in the preceding chapter David is already Saul's armorbearer. If we consider the Books as a connected history written by one writer, then some trouble must be taken to harmonize such apparently conflicting statements. But if we consider the Books as a compilation in which the editor has given side by side accounts of the same events written from different viewpoints, then the necessity for explaining difficulties vanishes. The value of the stories is the same in either case. That God is the supreme Ruler, and a nation's prosperity depends on its allegiance to him, is the underlying thought

of the stories about the establishment of the monarchy, for instance, and is wholly independent of Samuel's attitude towards the change of government.

How the Books Were Written. At the time that the events of the Civil War took place, much was written about it, and men who knew Lincoln wrote their estimation of him and recorded his sayings and deeds. Since then, biographers who had no personal knowledge of the War, and who never saw Lincoln, have written Lives of Lincoln, each from his own point of view. They went to "the original sources," as we call the records made at the time of the events, and from them selected the facts and incidents they wished to use for the purpose they had in mind; these they rewrote in their own words, and added their own thoughts in the way of explanations, inferences and deductions. If they had incorporated in their biographies the exact words of the original records, without quotation marks and without credit, and had welded them together with words of their own, they would have done what the Hebrew historians appear to have done who prepared the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles.

Their Purposes. A writer upon Old Testament themes compares the elaborate and lively accounts of the Battle of Salamis as told by Herodotus, and of Cannæ by Livy, with the word or two in Kings for the Siege of Samaria and the verse or two for the Capture of Jerusalem, and remarks that the interest of the writer of Kings in the details of history was not so living or consuming as our own. The Jews placed the historical books, from Joshua to Kings, in the section of the Old Testament known as The Prophets, thereby indicating that their history is written from the prophetic standpoint, the ideas and principles and illustrations, not the facts, being the chief interest. These historical books are histories written with a religious purpose. The writers have recorded events in the life of the nation and of individuals that show the growth and the decay of the Hebrew kingdom, and they have interpreted these events, revealing God's controlling hand through them all. There are two ways of writing history: "You can either leave God out", as Dr. Alexander Maclaren tells us, "or you can trace all things to him. The former way calls itself 'scientific' and 'positive.' The latter is the Bible way. Perhaps, if modern history were written on the same principle as the Books of Kings, the Divine hand would be as plainly visible—only it requires an inspired historian to do it." The inspired historians of these Books have given us what Browning calls "the spiritual life around the earthly life."

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

The Title. While the greater part of the Books of Samuel is devoted to Saul and David, they are called by the name of Samuel doubtless because the history of Samuel occupies the principal part of the early chapters, and he is a prominent character later, having anointed both Saul and David, his successors as leaders of the people.

The Date. Those who believe the Books to be a compilation assign 700 B. C. as about the date in which they were edited as we now have them.

Contents.

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfills himself in many ways,

are Tennyson's words which aptly befit the message of the Books of Samuel. They tell of the change in government and of the establishment of the monarchy. Beginning during the judgeship of Eli, they narrate the history of God's dealings with the Israelites under the leadership of Samuel, Saul, and David, ending with the close of David's life, a period of about one hundred years. At the beginning Israel is the collection of scattered tribes of which we read in the Book of Judges: at the close Israel is an important nation.

Outline of the Books.

I. The Early Life and Judgeship of Samuel. I S. 1-7.
   1. Birth, Childhood, and Vision of Samuel. 1.1-3.21.
   2. Defeat of Israel by the Philistines and Death of Eli. 4.1-22.
   3. The Ark Captured, Held, and Restored. 5.1-7.2.
   4. The Victory over the Philistines. 7.3-17.

II. The Reign of Saul. I S. 8-31.
1. Circumstances leading to the Choice of Saul as King. Chapters 8-10.
2. Saul's Conquest of the Ammonites. Chapter 11.
3. Samuel's Address. Chapter 12.
4. Saul's and Jonathan's Wars with the Philistines and Saul's Rejection. Chapters 13-15.
5. David Anointed. 16.1-13.
6. David at Court and his Victory over Goliath. 16.14-17.58.
7. Saul's Jealousy and Pursuit of David. 18.1-27.4.
8. David at Ziklag, Battle of Mount Gilboa, and Death of Saul. 27.5-31.13.

III. The Reign of David. 2 S. 1-24.
1. David Mourning for Saul and Jonathan. Chapter 1.
2. David Made King. Chapters 2-5.
3. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem. Chapter 6.
4. David's Wish to Build the Temple. Chapter 7.
5. David's Victories. Chapters 8-10.
6. David's Sin. Chapters 11 and 12.
7. Absalom's Vengeance and Rebellion. Chapters 13-18.
8. David's Return to Jerusalem and Revolt of Sheba. Chapters 19 and 20.

IV. An Appendix. Chapters 21-24.
1. Famine and Atonement. War with the Philistines. Chapter 21.
2. David's Psalm of Thanksgiving. Chapter 22.
3. List of David's Mighty Men. Chapter 23.
4. Numbering of the People. Chapter 24.

As Literature. The stories of Samuel, Saul and David are told with so much detail that they read more like a series of biographies than like history. The early chapters were the delight of Luther's heart; with unwonted tenderness he would read and re-read them, for to turn from his own strenuous and turbulent activities to the child Samuel "ministering before Jehovah" was a restful change. The tragic life of Saul—chosen, found wanting, rejected, maddened, eclipsed—is told with wonderful fascination and power. And as for the life of David—"it would be difficult to overpraise the literary and historical genius of the writer who traces the checkered course of David's reign." The writer rarely expresses a judgment, but he shows great literary skill in the way he gives us an insight into the springs of character. Gems of purest ray are David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan, and Nathan's parable of "Thou art the Man."

Lessons for Today. "As I watch the movement of this story, gathering around the three central figures, Samuel, Saul and David, the supreme revelation is not of these men, but of Jehovah reigning by the adaptation of his method to the requirements of the hour, and so through disobedience or obedience, through success or failure, through men loyal or rebellious, moving quietly, steadily, and surely on. This Book inspires a great song, which can best be uttered in the words of the Psalmist, 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice'."

THE BOOKS OF KINGS

The Title. They are called Books of the Kings because they cover that part of Israel's history in which the kings reigned. They mention all of Israel's kings except Saul.

The Date. We need to keep in mind the fact that most of the history as we have it was not written as soon as the events occurred. The last verses of Second Kings record the release of Jehoiachin from prison by Evil-Merodach in 561 B.C. and of an allowance made him "all his life", hence this part of the book must have been written after that king's death, or about 550 B.C. But the greater part of the Book was evidently written in Judah before the Exile, perhaps about 600 B.C., while there was yet hope that the nation might profit from its lessons.

Their Contents. The Books of Kings are a continuation of the Books of Samuel. The title of the Syriac Version reads: Here follows the Book of the Kings who flourished among this ancient people; and in it is also exhibited the history of the prophets who flourished in their time.

They begin with David's feeble old age, record the splendid glitter of Solomon's reign over the United Kingdom, and continue with the history of the

two kingdoms which arose at his death till the Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria and the Southern Kingdom by Babylon, thus covering a period of more than four centuries. Through it all we see the doom impending because of sins within the kingdom and foes without, until the nation is carried away captive and the land is left desolate.

Over and over again the account of a king ends with "now the rest of the acts of ——, behold, they are written in the book of the ——", showing that from the larger store of information at hand, the writer was selecting only that which best suited his purpose, that of emphasizing the religious side of Israel's life. He was not trying to write history; he was intent upon enforcing lessons so plain that they would be seen and heeded.

The narratives about Elijah and Elisha contain many miracles. No one who believes in the possibility of miracles can fail to see the reason for all those wrought by Elijah. Nor can one fail to notice the similarity between many of the miracles which Elisha performed and those of Elijah. Canon Farrar's observations may well be quoted here. "Some of the supernatural stories which gather round the name of Elisha are full of charm and tenderness, but in some cases it is difficult to point out their intrinsic superiority over the ecclesiastical miracles with which monkish historians have embellished the lives of their saints. We can but narrate them as they stand, for we possess none of the means for critical or historical analysis which might enable us to discriminate between essential facts and accidental elements."

Outline of the Books.

I. The Last Days of David and the Reign of Solomon, 1 K. 1-11.43.
   1. The Passing of David, 1 K. 1.1-2.11.
   2. The Greatness of Solomon, 1 K. 2.11-4.34; 10.1-29.
   3. The Building and Dedication of the First Temple, 1 K. 5.1-9.28.
   4. Solomon's Apostasy, Adversaries, and Death, 1 K. 11.1-43.

II. The History of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel from the Disruption until the Fall of the Kingdom of Israel, 1 K. 12-2 K. 17.
   1. Rehoboam in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel, 1 K. 12.1-14.31.
   2. Abijam and Asa in Judah, 1 K. 15.1-24.
   3. Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri and Ahab in Israel, 1 K. 15.25-16.34.
   4. The Prophet Elijah, 1 K. 17.1-2 K. 2.12.
      a. Defeat of the Syrians under Benhadad, 1 K. 20.
      b. Ahab's death, 1 K. 22.1-40.
      c. Jehoshaphat's and Ahaziah's Reigns, 1 K. 22.41-2 K. 1.18.
   5. The Prophet Elisha, 2 K. 2.1-8.15; 13,14-21.
   6. Jehoram and Ahaziah in Judah, 2 K. 8.16-29.
   7. Jehu in Israel, 2 K. 9.1-10.36.
   8. Athaliah and Jehoash in Judah, 2 K. 11.1-12.21.
   9. Jehoahaz and Jehoash in Israel, 2 K. 13.1-13.
      Wars with Moab and Syria, 2 K. 13.22-25.
   10. Amaziah and Azariah in Judah, 2 K. 14.1-22; 15.1-7.
   11. Jeroboam II. Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah and Pekah in Israel, 2 K. 14.23-29; 15.8-31.
      a. Assyrian invasion under Tiglath-Pileser, 2 K. 15.29.
   12. Jotham and Ahaz in Judah, 2 K. 15.32-16.20.
      a. Saved from Syria through Allegiance to Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria, 2 K. 15.5-18.
   13. Israel conquered by Assyria in Hoshea's Reign and carried into Captivity, 2 K. 17.1-41.
      a. Foreigners brought into Samaria, 2 K. 17.24-41.

III. The History of the Kingdom of Judah from the Fall of the Kingdom of Israel until the Babylonian Exile, 2 K. 18.1-25.37.
   1. Hezekiah's Reign, 2 K. 18-20.
      a. Invasion of Sennacherib, 2 K. 18.13-37.
      b. Isaiah's Prophecy of Deliverance, 2 K. 19.20-34.
   2. Manasseh's and Amon's Reigns, 2 K. 21.1-26.
   3. Josiah's Reign, 2 K. 22.1-23.30.
   4. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim's Reigns, 2 K. 23.31-24.6.
      a. Jehoahaz deposed by Pharaoh of Egypt, 2 K. 23.33.

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b. Jehoiakim becomes subject to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, 2 K. 24.1-5.
5. Jehoiachin's Reign, 2 K. 24.6-9.
a. The Captivity begins, 2 K. 24.10-16.
6. Zedekiah's Reign, 2 K. 24.17-24.19.
7. Jerusalem captured and Judah carried into Exile in Babylon, 2 K. 25.
a. The city laid waste and Temple destroyed, 2 K. 25.1-21.
b. Gedaliah made Governor of Judah, 2 K. 25.22-26.
c. Jehoiachin kindly treated by Evil-Merodach, 2 K. 25.27-30.

As Literature. There is a monotonous uniformity about the accounts of the kings, and as a rule they are as lifeless as some extracts from modern official documents. Most of them read like bare summaries of more expanded writings. The "framework" of each record is as follows:

I. Date of the king's accession according to the year of the contemporary king of the other kingdom; his age at the time; the duration of his reign; the name of his mother.

II. An account of his deeds and pronouncement of judgment thereon. Sometimes parts I and III are all that are given, the writer not deeming it necessary to give the facts on which he bases his praise or condemnation.

III. A reference to the source of some of the writer's information; a notice of the king's death and burial; the name of his successor.

"The historian has been blamed for the perpetual gloom which enwraps his narrative," says Canon Farrar, "but surely the criticism is unjust. He did not invent his story. The picture is, after all, far less gloomy than that presented in many a great historic record. Consider the features of such an age as that recorded by Tacitus, with the 'Iliad of woes' of which he was the annalist, the long ages of darkness in the fifth and following centuries; of the Northmen; the condition of England in the middle of the fourteenth century when the Black Death swept away half of her population; the extreme misery of the masses after the Thirty Years' War; or the desolating horrors of the wars of Napoleon which filled Germany with homeless and starving orphans. The annals of the Hebrew monarchy are less grim than these."

The contrast between the accounts of the lives of the kings and those of the prophets is most striking. Elijah and Elisha loom large (1 K. 17-2 K. 8, with a few exceptions), their stories occupy nearly a third of the Books. Here we are in another atmosphere. The narratives are graphic and stirring, rich in picturesque and vivid detail, and told with splendid dramatic power.

Lessons for Today. The historians looked at the kings and their ways from the high standpoint of whether the acts were pleasing or displeasing to God. With monotonous regularity we are told of each king of the Northern Kingdom, from Jeroboam to Hoshea, that "he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord," and even of some of the good kings of the Southern Kingdom—Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham—it is added that "nevertheless the high places were not removed."

Judgment is pronounced upon each king, not as to his ability or statesmanship, but as to his relation to God, and the space given to each reign does not depend upon its importance politically but upon whether it promoted or retarded the right worship of the Lord. Jeroboam II, who had a long, prosperous reign, is dismissed in two or three verses, while Ahab is dealt with at considerable length because in his reign occurred the great struggle against Baalism.

The one main lesson which the narrative of the Books of Kings is meant to teach, Canon Farrar points out, is absolute faith and trust in God as an anchor which holds amid the wildest storms of ruin, and of apparently final failure. It shows us that duty is the reward of duty, and that there can be no happiness save for those who have learnt that duty and blessedness are one. And thus even by this book of annals—annals of wild deeds and troubled times—we may be taught the truths which find their perfect illustration and proof in the life and teaching of the Son of God.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

The Title. Jerome first gave the Books this name of Chronicles, in his translation into the Latin. The Septuagint (Greek) Version calls them "The Things Omitted." They contain information omitted in Samuel and Kings in regard to the worship at Jerusalem, as well as a repetition, often with additional facts and observations, of portions of those Books. The Syriac title is "the Book of the Transactions of the Kings of Judah." After the Disruption the record of Judah only is given.

Date. The genealogy in the third chapter of First Chronicles carries the history to six generations after Zerubbabel, or about 350 B.C., and the Greek text takes it down five generations later still, to about 250 B.C. The writing is generally assigned to 300 B.C., when it was necessary to inform those who had returned from Captivity of the former glory of the Temple and their need of it and its worship.

Contents. The Books furnish an account of the worship of the Israelites from the death of Saul to the decree of Cyrus permitting the rebuilding of the Temple, as well as a condensed history of events from the beginning of things till the captivity of Judah.

Jerome calls them "an epitome of the Old Testament." The history of First Chronicles from the tenth chapter is parallel with that of the Books of Samuel: Second Chronicles covers the same period as the Book of Kings, and closes in the middle of the sentence with which Ezra begins. The Books of Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah are one continuous history. The Chronicler was evidently familiar with the Books of Samuel and Kings, for he uses the exact words of these Books at times, proving that he either copied directly from them (he wrote about three centuries later), or from the sources from which the writers of these earlier Books copied.

Compared with Samuel and Kings. A comparison of 1 S. 31 and 1 Ch. 10 shows the typical difference between the two: the changes from the text of Samuel in the first twelve verses of Chronicles are slight, and then in the next two verses Chronicles has condensed several chapters of Samuel. Chronicles is remarkable for the things which it omits from the stories of David and Solomon—David's sins against Uriah, Absalom's sins and rebellion, the intrigues which secured the throne for Solomon, and Solomon's foreign marriages and idolatries. The Chronicler would not repeat the sins of the House of David. After the Division of the Kingdom, Kings gives the history of both the Northern and the Southern Kingdom, but Chronicles omits the whole history of Northern Israel save for an occasional bare reference, given incidentally, because of its connection with the Kingdom of Judah. In 2 Ch. 25, 7 we read, "There came a man of God to him (Amaziah) saying, O King, let not the army of Israel go with thee, for Jehovah is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim": this, seemingly, is the belief of the Chronicler throughout his record.

Chronicles omits the long stories about the prophets Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah and Elisha, and gives accounts of other prophets not mentioned in Samuel and Kings, Azariah, the two Odeds, Hanani, Jahaziel and Zechariah the son of Jehoiada.

The viewpoints of the writers of Kings and Chronicles are different. Both give a succession of narratives, not for the sake of the history, but for the sake of their religious import, and both were interested in the correct worship of Jehovah in the Temple at Jerusalem, but for the Chronicler and not for the writer of Kings, all ritual interests were of superior importance. His interest lay primarily in the Temple with its worship, its priests, Levites and singers, and secondarily he was intent upon pointing the moral, in emphasizing the fact that sin is followed by punishment, and that goodness is rewarded.

Outline of the Books.

I. Genealogical Tables from Adam to Nehemiah, 1 Ch. 1-9.
II. Death of Saul, 1 Ch. 10.

III. David's Reign, 1 Ch. 11-29.
1. David's Accession and his Followers, 1 Ch. 11-12.
2. The Ark, 1 Ch. 13-16.
3. David's Victories, Gathering of Treasure for the Temple, and Numbering of the People, 1 Ch. 18-21.
4. The Temple: David's Desire to build it; his Preparation for the Building and its Services, 1 Ch. 17.22-29.
5. Death of David, 1 Ch. 29.26-30.

IV. Solomon's Reign, 2 Ch. 1-9.
1. His Prosperity, 2 Ch. 1-2; 8-9.
2. Building and Consecration of Temple, 2 Ch. 3.7.
3. His Death, 2 Ch. 9.29-31.

V. The Kings of Judah from the Disruption till the Return from Captivity, 2 Ch. 10-36.
1. Revolt of the Ten Tribes under Jeroboam, 2 Ch, 10.1-11.4.
2. Degeneracy under Rehoboam and Abijah, 2 Ch. 11.5-13.22.
3. Reforms under Asa and Jehoshaphat, 2 Ch. 14-20.
4. Degeneracy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah, 2 Ch. 21-23.
5. Reform under Joash, 2 Ch. 24.
6. Degeneracy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz, 2 Ch. 25-28.
7. Reform under Hezekiah, 2 Ch. 29-32.
8. Degeneracy under Manasseh and Amon, 2 Ch. 33.
9. Reform under Josiah, 2 Ch. 34-35.
10. Degeneracy under Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, 2 Ch, 36.1-16.
11. Captivity, 2 Ch. 36.1-23.

Lessons for Today. Professor Edward L. Curtis, in his commentary, gives this just estimate of the value of these Books. "The religious value of Chronicles lies in the emphasis given to the institutional forms of religion. Forms, ceremonies, institutions of one sort or another, are necessary for the maintenance of religious life. However narrow the Chronicler's teachings may be considered, and however artificial their products, without the shell of Judaistic legalism and ecclesiasticism it is difficult to see how the precious truths of Divine revelation in Hebrew prophecy could have been preserved. Otherwise, amid encroaching forces of the Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations they would have been dissipated, and no place would have been prepared for the appearance of Christ and the growth of Christianity."

Yet the obvious sacerdotalism, prominent as it is, does not obscure the greatest thoughts of the Books, the belief in a righteous God, "Jehovah the Good," and the deep concern for fidelity to him. In the beautiful prayer uttered by Hezekiah we see this triumph over ritualism: "The good Jehovah pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." And it is a God who is omnipotent, who stirs up the heart of Pul and of Tiglath-Pileser, kings of Assyria, as well as the hearts of the children of Israel; who is omniscient—"His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth (2 Ch. 16.9), he searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts, and if one seeks him he will be found of him," 1 Ch. 28.9; he is also merciful; "Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him," 2 Ch. 30.9.

THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS

Major and Minor Prophets. In the Old Testament there are five Books which we call the Major Prophets and twelve which we call the Minor Prophets. These terms do not mean that the twelve Books are of less importance than the five Books; they simply mean that the twelve are the shorter ones, all of them together as they were written upon one roll in ancient days not equaling in length the Book of Isaiah. It was more than three centuries after Christ that Jerome and Augustine gave them this title of Minor Prophets.

Order of the Prophetical Books. The Books are not arranged in our Bible according to their chronological order. It is impossible to tell the

date of the Books with accuracy, but they may be grouped into four periods:

1. The Period of the Assyrian Ascendency: Amos, Hosea, the first part of Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum.
2. The Period of Judah's Decline: Jeremiah, Habakkuk.
3. The Period of the Exile and Restoration: Ezekiel, the last part of Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.
4. Later: perhaps Joel, Jonah, Daniel and Obadiah.

Our course contains lessons from four of the Minor Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Jonah, Daniel.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

The Eighth Century Prophets. In the eighth century B.C. there were four great prophets, Amos, and Hosea who spoke in Israel, and Isaiah and Micah who spoke in Judah. We have lessons this year from the two former only.

The Prophet Amos. I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore-trees; and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel, Amos 7.14,15. Amos was not a member of a prophetic guild, but he was chosen by Jehovah to be his messenger to Israel—he was an "inspired farmer." He could no more help prophesying, he tells us, than one can help fearing when the lion roars. "The lion hath roared, who will not fear; Jehovah God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" Amos was a Judean. In the desolate, sandy uplands south of Tekoa he had pastured his flocks. He was a desert man. In the desert where a man is alone with God and has time to meditate and form clear judgments, Amos, like Moses and Elijah and John the Baptist, learned leadership. He had meditated long and earnestly upon Israel's sins and probable fate, when God "took him": there flashed upon him the conviction that he must be God's messenger to his people Israel, that through him the Divine warning must be spoken.

Amos was the champion of "the simple life." He lived simply himself, and he had no use for those who lived in idle luxury. He was intense in his beliefs and feelings. Throughout his address we see his hatred of all evidences of luxury or grandeur, his regard for the lowly and needy, his sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed. Forcibly does his address show forth the influence of his life among the wilds of Southern Judea. To him life was serious, nature was stern, God was severe. "To him the thunder and lightning, wind, storm and tempest, which he so often witnessed in all their fierceness and awe-inspiring grandeur on those lonely hills, were but manifestations of God's anger with his sinning people, an anger which was demanded because God was just. And the teaching of Amos dealt mainly with the wrath of God."

Amos was a fearless servant of God. Like David, in the care of his flock he had braved ferocious beasts—the lion and the bear—and he could face brutal men without quailing. Opposition and enmity were his portion. Trouble for him culminated at one of the great festivals of Bethel, when he accused the Israelites of having sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes, of having turned aside the way of the meek and laid themselves down by every altar upon clothes taken in pledge. Therefore, despite their seeming prosperity, disaster would overtake them. Amaziah, the supercilious priest of Bethel, tried to silence him. Amaziah sent a message to the king accusing Amos of treason and endeavored to frighten Amos away, but Amos fearlessly finished his warning, and evidently on his return to Judah wrote down the substance of his addresses. Tradition—which may or may not be true—says that he was cruelly beaten and died in a short time after being carried back to Judea.

We think of those princes and elders, the wealthy and powerful in Israel, as listening to this herdsman from Tekoa in utter astonishment. They were as astonished (Dr. Jowett makes the comparison) as Sir Philip Warrick and many others were astonished, when a farmer named Oliver Cromwell came from Huntingdon, and stood amid the refinements of the English Parliament, stood there "in a plain cloth suit, made by an ill country tailor," and spoke

to the assembled representatives "with voice sharp and untunable, but with eloquence full of fervor."

How could a mere herdsman and dresser of sycamore-trees have such a remarkable command of language as his writing shows? Professor Robertson Smith explains: "To associate inferior culture with the simplicity and poverty of pastoral life is totally to mistake the conditions of Eastern society. At the courts of their Caliphs and their Emirs, the rude Arabs of the desert were wont to appear without any feeling of awkwardness and to surprise the courtiers by the finish of their impromptu verses, the fluent eloquence of their oratory and the range of subjects on which they could speak with knowledge and discrimination. Among the Hebrews, as in the Arabian desert, knowledge and oratory were not affairs of professional education, or dependent for their cultivation on wealth or social status. The sum of book learning was small; men of all ranks mingled with that oriental freedom which is so foreign to our habits. A shrewd observation, a memory retentive of traditional lore and the faculty of original reflection took the place of laborious study as the ground of intellectual pre-eminence."

Shall we wonder, too, that Amos the herdsman had so intimate a knowledge of the Court of Israel and of the character and strength and ambitions of surrounding nations, even as far as Damascus? The explanation is that as a wool-grower he probably made yearly trips to the leading markets of Judah and Israel, and occasionally even to the Jewish trading quarters in Damascus. It was only an hour from Tekoa to the great highway leading to Hebron; Bethlehem was but six miles from Tekoa, Jerusalem twelve miles, Bethel in the territory of Israel twenty-two miles, and Samaria, the capital, forty-two miles away. In caravans and in market-places he must have met men of other nations and he was keenly observant, and wise in the deductions he drew from what he saw and heard.

The Date of the Book of Amos. Amos lived in the eighth century B.C., in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. "Two years before the earthquake" he himself dates the beginning of his prophecy. Uzziah reigned forty-five years in Jerusalem (782-737 B.C.) and somewhere in that reign occurred an earthquake so startling and devastating that the Judeans dated events from it, just as they so often dated them from the deliverance from Egypt. It was probably in the middle of the eighth century B.C., perhaps 755 B.C., that Amos wrote his Book, the first of all the prophetical books, hence he is called "the father of written prophecy." The book of Amos is, moreover, the oldest book in the Bible; for while parts of the Historical Books were written earlier, taking the books of the Bible as they stand, this is the oldest of them all.

The Times. The prophets were in the fullest sense the products of the age in which they lived, imbued with its thoughts and cognizant of its problems. We can not grasp their message unless we know something about the time in which they lived, the character of king and people, their sins and weaknesses and needs, the national enemies and impending dangers—the situation, in a word, which called forth their utterances.

To all outward seeming Israel was at peace and exceedingly prosperous in the time of Amos. Jeroboam II, the greatest of the kings of the northern kingdom, had a long and brilliant reign. Before his time Israel had lost much territory in wars with the Syrians, but the Syrians were now vanquished by the Assyrians, and Israel rapidly regained lost ground, for Jeroboam II was most successful in his military exploits. Israel was even at the height of its prosperity, feared by its enemies and respected by its allies, its foreign trade greatly expanded and its domestic commerce flourishing, and everywhere there were evidences of superabundant wealth. Men and women were "at ease in Zion"; clothed in "purple and fine linen", they reclined in ivory chairs by day and rested on ivory couches by night. But Amos was not deceived by all this display. He noted the concomitant evils, indolence and corruption and injustice, feastings and revellings and intemperance, and the belief that God would overlook all things, that because they were his chosen people God must protect them from their enemies, that if they but observed an elaborate ritual worship they could sin as they pleased, and all would be well. "Not far beneath this shining surface", writes Dr. McFadyen, "the

clear eyes of Amos saw the symptoms of decay; and the words of his first recorded message are that Jehovah, the God of this easy-going people, would roar from his temple in Jerusalem, like a lion just before he makes his spring. The implication is that Jehovah will soon spring upon his people, to tear them to pieces; and Amos's message we might describe as the Gospel of the Lion's Roar."

The Message of Amos. "A Cry for Justice" is the title which Dr. J. E. McFadyen gives to his "Study in Amos", and no single term could better describe the Book.

The first thing that strikes the reader of Amos is its remarkable grasp of the fact of God's universal rule. To Amos, Israel was but one of many nations, upon all of whom God's laws of justice and kindness and righteousness are binding. One marvels at such an utterance as this at that early age: "Are ye not as the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, also the Philistine from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" Did Amos fully realize all that these words imply? The tribal point of view had been that Jehovah was the God of Israel; if there were different gods there might be different moral codes. While Amos holds all nations responsible for their failure to keep God's laws, he is far more severe in condemning the iniquity of Israel, for Israel is the most privileged (3.2), therefore the most accountable.

Beginning with Damascus, the farthest away, Amos comes nearer and nearer home in his condemnations, first to Gaza and Tyre, then to Edom and Ammon and Moab, next to Judah, and last of all to Israel, the chief of sinners. "Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of ——, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof," are the words with which he introduces his denunciation of each nation.

Four great facts stand out in his message to Israel: (1) the iniquity of Israel; (2) the righteousness and wrath of Jehovah; (3) the certainty of judgment; (4) the Assyrians will be God's agents in meting out the punishment.

(1) The iniquity of Israel is manifold: luxuriousness, intemperance, greed, land-robbery, perversion of justice, false weights and measures, immorality, blasphemy, sacrilege. Amos's pictures are dark, relieved only in the last chapter by a gleam of hope. (2) Amos emphasizes the greatness and holiness of God. Listen to his beautiful words in 4.13: "For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name"; and read his sublime description of the righteousness of God in the last chapter of the Book. (3) The key-note of the Book is "judgment". Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, 4.12. (4) As Jesus foresaw the coming of the Roman power to destroy Jerusalem (Lk. 19.41-44), so Amos foresaw in an Assyrian invasion the destruction of Samaria. In a series of visions (7.1-9; 8.1-3; 9.1) he beheld ever more and more distinctly the doom advancing. Twice he prayed that the blow might be averted, 7.2,5.

Outline of the Book.

I. Introduction, I. 1-2.
II. Arraignment of the Nations, I.3-II.16.
    Syria (Damascus) 1.3-5; Philistia (Gaza) 1.6-8; Phœnicia (Tyre) 9.9-10; Edom, 1.11-12; Ammon, 1.13-15; Moab, 2.1-3; Judah, 2.4-5; Israel 2.6-16.
III. Special Arraignment of Israel, III-VI.
    1. First Discourse: Jehovah's Verdict and Sentence, III.
    2. Second Discourse: Indictment of the Women; Final Summons of the People, IV.
    3. Third Discourse: Jehovah's Judgment, V, VI.
IV. Visions of Destruction, VII. 1-IX.6.
    Locusts, 7.1-3; fire, 7.4-6; Plumbline, 7.7-9; (Amaziah's Accusation and Amos's Answer, 7.10-17); Summer-fruit, 8.1-14; Jehovah by the Altar. 9.1-6.
V. A Gleam of Hope, and Promise of Restoration, IX, 11-15.

As Literature. Jerome spoke disparagingly of Amos's style, saying that he was "rude in speech, but not in knowledge". Amos writes unconventionally perhaps, forcibly and even harshly, but always freshly and clearly and often with rhetorical passages of great beauty. The writing has all the force of a spoken address—pointed, dramatic delivery, a strong, passionate appeal of a living man dealing with living people and vital questions.

The imagery of the book is drawn from the common world. In brilliant metaphor and vivid word pictures he speaks of sheep and wild animals, of ploughman and sower and reaper, of winds and hurricanes, mildew and yellow blight and locusts and decaying fruit.

There is a remarkable passage in 3.3-8 in which the prophet expresses his conception of the world as an arena of law and order, cause and effect. "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? Shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all? Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it? The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

Noticeable are his numerous orderly series: in the first two chapters nations are arraigned in order, from the most distant down to the homeland; the sins of Israel and the proofs of God's patience and goodness are listed in two orderly series in the second chapter; there is a series of illustrations in the third chapter, of punishments in the fourth, of evidences of idle luxury in the sixth, of visions in the seventh, of statements as to the unavoidableness of God's judgment in the ninth.

Professor Edgar Whitaker Work refers to the clear and chaste style of Lincoln's immortal addresses and finds a resemblance between them and the Book of Amos. Let the reader read the second Inaugural with its measured tread of advancing thought and its occasional sharp staccato sentences, together with its prevailing optimism, he suggests, and then turn to the last chapter of the prophecy by Amos to read his description of the righteousness of God, along with the beautiful pictures of the Restoration.

Lessons for Today. It is not for his own time only that Amos enjoins his readers to "Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate": his voice, though addressed to Israel more than twenty-six centuries ago, still thunders on and stirs the hearts of men. We cannot read the book without asking ourselves, Is our nation morally sound? Do we believe that if ours is a favored nation, her unrighteousness will be all the more severely punished? Does our conduct—whether as merchants or landowners or judges or men of wealth and leisure—square with God's demands of justice and equity? Do we not know that the greatest of perils lies, not in poverty, but in prosperity? Do we not know that God disciplines his people, and that discipline unheeded fixes destiny?

Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream, 5.24. This is the ideal which Amos had in mind for the Israelites. By "judgment" he meant "justice", that virtue which impels us to give every one his just due; and by righteousness, upright conduct, especially toward the weak and oppressed. Thus tersely and forcibly he urged the doing of the right and loving thing to another—Justice and Equity were to fill the land as with a flood of constant and vivifying waters. In the face of modern conditions, do we not need righteousness as a river flowing through the land and bringing blessing to all the people?

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The Prophet Hosea. The second in order of time of the great prophets of the eighth century who left a written record of their teachings, is Hosea, the son of Beeri. We know only what can be inferred about him from his writing. He was the only one of the prophetical writers who was a native of the Northern Kingdom: this we assume from the fact that all the places he mentions are in the land of Ephraim and because of his great sympathy with

the people of the Northern Kingdom. He prophesied in the latter days of Jeroboam II and his immediate successors. From the historical allusions in the Book we learn that his prophetical career fell between the years 746 and 735 B.C.

He was a strong, tender-hearted, emotional, deeply religious character. There are two interpretations of Hosea's words which concern his domestic life. He begins his Book by saying that Jehovah had told him to "take a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom", and the obvious interpretation is that he is here speaking of his marriage from the point of view of his later knowledge of his wife's unfaithfulness. Others think that the prophet is using a figure of speech to describe Israel, and the words mean, "Go, marry a woman of the apostate Northern Kingdom." Throughout the Book the references to his wife refer, in the obvious interpretation, to his domestic experiences; in the second interpretation the terms refer to the spiritual condition of the wayward kingdom, and especially to Samaria, the "mother".

The Times. Hosea followed Amos in time. His prophecies in the first three chapters are assigned to the peaceful, prosperous period before the death of Jeroboam II, but the prophecies of chapters 4-14 belong to the confused times that followed, when kings were assassinated in rapid succession, when by their desire for alliance with Assyria or Egypt the rulers were heading the Ship of State towards inevitable doom, when corruption and defiance of law reigned. Read 2 K. 14.23-17.6.

"In Amos's day, who prophesied under Jeroboam, society was dissolute, but in Hosea's day it was dissolved," writes Dr. A. B. Davidson. "In his day every class seemed flung against another; and the furious passions, whether revolutionary or immoral, of the people consumed all about them. In those circumstances it hardly needed a prophet to see that the end of the State was at hand. And, what was worst of all, no hold could be had of the people, from their superficial fickleness and moral shallowness. Sometimes they seemed resolved to abide by their idolatry, with a resolute insensibility to better things: 'Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.' Sometimes, again, the feeling of the time relative to Jehovah seemed as if it would come back, and soften their hearts—'Come, let us return unto Jehovah . . . he hath smitten, and he will bind up' (6.1). But their superficiality and changeableness threw even the Divine mind into despair (6.4)."

Contents of the Book. The Book of Hosea divides naturally into two parts. Part I, including chapters 1-3, and Part II, chapters 4-14.

Part I. "A wife in New York wronged her husband cruelly some years ago, running away with another man. The other day, having long ago been deserted and now an outcast and miserable, she met her husband. She turned away in shame to avoid him. He looked at her with the old look and said in the old tones, 'Mary.' She returned and was saved, finding the love unchanged. His friends at first said he was a fool, although now they are wondering, having seen the great redemption. He knew what Christ-love was. To imitate his love is to love to the end."

This paragraph I find in an editorial upon "Imitating the Love of Christ" in the *Christian Work and Evangelist.* Is it not the story of Hosea in modern terms, that personal experience of his which illustrated in his mind *Imitating the Love of God?*

Hosea records his domestic misery, the unfaithfulness of his wife Gomer, his love that led him to buy her release from her slavery, and his efforts to bring about her redemption. If human love can be so deep and lasting, how unfathomable must be the Divine love! is the lesson Hosea learns. Between this personal history and God's relation to his people Israel the prophet sees an analogy. Israel is unfaithful to God, yet God still loves his people and would redeem them, even though it must be through the discipline of exile.

Part II. The first verse announces its main theme: "Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land." Hosea does not hesitate to lay bare the evils of the time, the trust in an alliance with Assyria or Egypt, the forgetfulness of God, the observing of the forms of worship but mingling idolatry with it, and the social crimes of his day, immorality and violence and intemperance. Though

his message is a stern one, denouncing, warning, threatening, yet his words are "more sob than speech", and through it runs a tender note, as he pleads for return to God, and tells of the forgiving love of God that will not let his people go.

Outline of the Book.

I. The Prophet's Lesson, 1-3.
   1. His Domestic life, 1.
   2. Its Lesson, the Nature of Israel's Sin, 2.
   3. Forgiveness, 3.
II. The Prophet's Messages, 4-14.
   1. Israel's Sins Rebuked, 4-7.
   2. Israel's Retribution, 8-10.
   3. The Love of Jehovah for His Wayward People, 11-14.

The Message of Hosea. The general thought of Hosea's message Dr. Harper well sums up in these few propositions: Israel is wicked through and through, and her condition morally is that of rottenness. Israel is politically doomed, the last stages of decay having now been reached. Jehovah is Israel's father, with all a father's love and interest; he is Israel's husband, with all a husband's love and devotion. Israel fails to comprehend Jehovah, has a totally wrong conception of him, in short, Israel does not know Jehovah. Israel deceives herself in her acts of repentance, but there is a repentance which consists in the turning back to Jehovah. Israel's present attitude toward Jehovah's love means, in the end, her total destruction.

The central idea of Hosea's teaching is the love of God. "He is the first of the prophets to rise to the sublime height of calling the affection with which Jehovah regards his people by the name of love."

Amos and Hosea Compared. Hosea pictures the wickedness of the times more vividly than does Amos, and enters more into detail concerning the political situation and the immediacy of its doom. Amos was the prophet of morality; Hosea the prophet of religion: Amos the prophet of the righteous God; Hosea, the prophet of the love of God: Amos was the stern denouncer, the first "Doomster", Hosea was the passionate pleader, the first Evangelist. There is nothing of the mystic in Amos; there is much in Hosea, who finds something typical in all experiences.

Dr. George Adam Smith, writing of the debt which subsequent prophecy owes to Hosea, says: "We shall not exaggerate if we say that there is no truth uttered by later prophets about the Divine Grace, which we do not find in germ in him. Isaiah of Jerusalem was a greater statesman and a more powerful writer, but he had not Hosea's tenderness and insight into motive and character. Hosea's marvelous sympathy with the people and with God is sufficient to foreshadow every grief, every hope, every gospel, which make the Books of Jeremiah and the great Prophet of the Exile exhaustless in their spiritual value for mankind. The others explored the kingdom of God: it was Hosea who took it by storm. He is the first prophet of Grace, Israel's earliest Evangelist; yet with as keen a sense of law, and of the inevitableness of ethical discipline, as Amos himself."

And again Dr. Smith writes: "Moral decay means political decay. It is part of Hosea's greatness to have traced this, a proof of that versatility which distinguishes him above other prophets. The most spiritual of them all, he is at the same time the most political. We owe him an analysis of repentance to which the New Testament has little to add; but he has also left us a criticism of society and of politics in Israel, unrivalled except by Isaiah. We owe him an intellectual conception of God which for the first time in Israel exploded idolatry; yet he is also the first to define Israel's position in the politics of Western Asia. With the single courage of conscience Amos had said to the people: You are bad, therefore you must perish. But Hosea's is the insight to follow the processes by which sin brings forth death."

"If Amos is the St. James of the Old Testament, Hosea is the St. John," says Professor McFadyen.

As Literature. The First Part of the Book is on the whole a continuous narrative: the Second Part consists of a series of addresses and reflections in which upbraidings and appeals are commingled. The style of the two parts

is as different as their manner and method. The language of the First Part is in the main logical. The Second Part is noticeably disconnected and abrupt, full of elliptic and ejaculatory phrases, with swift transitions of thought. The last chapter reminds one of the calm that follows a tempest, with its quiet, beautiful words of exhortation and promised blessings.

"The poetry of Hosea clings about his native soil like its trailing vines. God's love-gifts to his people are corn and wool, flax and oil; while spiritual blessings are figured in the joys of them who sow and reap. With Hosea we feel all the seasons of the Syrian year: early rain and latter rain, the first flush of the young corn, the scent of the vine blossom, the 'first ripe fig of the fig-tree in her first season', the bursting of the lily; the wild vine trailing on the hedge, the field of tares, the beauty of the full olive in sunshine and breeze; the mists and heavy dews of a summer morning in Ephraim, the night winds laden with the air of the mountains, 'the scent of Lebanon'. Or it is the dearer human sights in valley and field: the smoke from the chimney, the chaff from the threshing-floor, the doves startled to their towers, the fowler and his net; the breaking up of the fallow ground, the harrowing of the clods, the reapers, the heifer that treadeth out the corn, the team of draught oxen surmounting the steep road, and at the top the kindly driver setting in food to their jaws. Where do we find anything like this save in the parables of Jesus? For the love of Hosea was as the love of that greater Galilean: however high, however lonely it soared, it was yet rooted in the common life below, and fed with the unfailing grace of a thousand homely sources" (Dr. G. A. Smith).

The most memorable verse of the Book is 6.6, the one twice quoted by Christ: For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.

Lessons for Today. Hosea taught the all-comprehending, never-ceasing, seeking and saving love of God. Though Hosea hoped for Israel beyond measure, he saw God truly, Dr. Lyman Abbott explains: "The people of the Northern Kingdom, to whom Hosea prophesied, never did return to Jehovah; they abandoned their religion when they went into captivity, and in losing their religion lost their nationality and have forever disappeared from the world's history. But the love of God which Hosea experienced is eternal, and the power of that love and the joy of that love in the return of the repentant are eternal, and in this love, rejoicing to rescue from sin whoever will accept rescue, lies the secret of all restoration to life from apostasy, national or individual."

How the Divine power works in the human soul, and causes it to blossom and bear fruit, growing in beauty and in usefulness, is beautifully expressed in Hosea 14.5-7. He who yields himself to the Divine influence shall become pure in heart, "blossoming as the lily"; shall become deeply rooted in Christian character, "casting forth his roots as Lebanon"; shall expand in the knowledge and love of God, "his branches shall spread"; shall grow winsome, "his beauty shall be as the olive-tree and his smell as Lebanon"; shall become a blessing to others; "they that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the grain and blossom as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

A later writer adds a word of counsel for us at the close of the Book: "Let him who would be wise and prudent know and understand the words of Hosea: through them he may learn that the ways of Jehovah are right and that they determine the fate of all: the just walk in them without stumbling, but the evil-doers fall."

THE BOOK OF JONAH

The Prophet Jonah. Jonah, the son of Amittai, a native of Gath-hepher, is the subject of the Book. His prediction of the extension of the kingdom from the Orontes to the Dead Sea recorded in 2 K. 14.25 was fulfilled in the reign of Jeroboam II, or 781-740 B.B. If, as is generally assumed, his prediction was also uttered in that reign, he followed Elijah and Elisha as prophet.

The Authorship and Date of the Book. Jonah, the son of Amittai, is the subject of the Book, but not its author. The Book makes no statement

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as to its authorship or date. Whoever the author was, he has written with great vividness and dramatic power, and must have been an artist as well as prophet.

"Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city," we read in Jonah 3.3. Had it been great at the time of the writing of the Book, the past tense would not have been used. Nineveh was practically destroyed in 607 B.C., hence we must conclude that the Book was not written till after that date; perhaps a much longer time intervened between the life of the prophet Jonah and that of the prophet who wrote the Book of Jonah. The Hebrew is of late origin, and many scholars assign it to the period following the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. At that time Jewish narrowness had grown intense. The little group of exiles made every effort to strengthen themselves in the land against the peoples of many races with whom Canaan had been filled by the Babylonians. They rebuilt the Temple, extended its ritual, emphasized the dignity of the priesthood and the severe laws of the Sabbath, enjoined the putting away of the Gentile wives among them, and in every possible manner intensified their exclusiveness.

In such a time as this there came to the writer of the Book of Jonah a marvelous revelation of the fact that Jehovah is God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and of the call of the Jews to make him known to the Gentiles. These truths he taught his countrymen in connection with the story of the prophet Jonah. It is a noble protest against his countrymen's narrow and intolerant attitude toward foreigners.

The Story. The story gives the experiences of a great evangelist. God commanded this evangelist, the prophet Jonah, to carry a warning message to the heathen in Nineveh. Jonah feared that God would repent of his purpose and spare Nineveh (4.2), and he rebelled. In foolish flight he went in the opposite direction, at Joppa found a ship bound for Tarshish—the Phœnician colony on the southwest of Spain, then regarded as the very end of the earth—and went aboard. God sent a violent storm, the sailors concluded that some one had offended his god, and they cast lots to discover the culprit. The lot fell upon Jonah, and he acknowledged his guilt and advised them to throw him into the sea. Finding their efforts to row back to land unavailing, the sailors prayed to Jehovah and then reluctantly cast Jonah overboard. The sea ceased from its raging and the sailors feared Jehovah. Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. His prayer during that time is recorded. At the command of Jehovah the fish cast Jonah out upon dry land.

God repeated his command, and this time the prophet answered and humbly obeyed. He went to Nineveh and preached, crying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." It was a great city, so great that it took three days to pass through it: when the prophet had gone only a third of the way the people, from the king to the lowest subject, believed his message, and at the king's proclamation they all fasted—even the domestic animals. In sackcloth and ashes they cried unto God, hoping that he would change his purpose and spare them. Their repentance was accepted by God.

Jonah was very angry. He told the Lord that this was what he had feared when he fled to Tarshish. "I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, and repentest thee of the evil," he said; therefore—(since I am discredited as a prophet, and the distinction of Israel as the only people of God is to be taken away, their enemies, the Ninevites, are to share in the rights of the children of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob)—I beseech thee, "take my life from me." "Doest thou well to be angry?" questioned God. Then the angry prophet went without the city, and built a booth under which to sit and see what should happen. By divine appointment three things happened: a gourd grew up in the night and shaded Jonah, a worm attacked it the next day and it withered, and a sultry east wind beat upon the prophet's head till again he asked that he might die. "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" questioned God, and the sulking prophet answered, "I do well to be angry even unto death." "You have regard for the gourd which you neither made nor caused to grow; and shall I not have regard for the great city of Nineveh with its many thousands of little children and much cattle?" is the lesson God taught his rebellious prophet.

This is the story. And the fact that this narrative is classed among the Prophetical Books rather than among the historical, indicates that it has more similarity with prophecy than with history, that its value does not consist in its facts but in its ideas.

Outline of the Book.

I. Jonah's Commission, Disobedience, and Punishment, 1.1-16.
II. Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance, 1.17-2.10.
III. Jonah's Obedience and the Result, 3.1-10.
IV. Jonah's Complaint and Rebuke, 4.1-11.

Two Views in Regard to the Book. One view is that the writer merely recorded history just as it literally occurred. Another view is that he sought by means of a didactic narrative, a dramatically told story woven around the life of the prophet Jonah, to teach certain great truths.

As an allegory it is thus interpreted. Israel's high vocation had been announced to the patriarch Abraham—In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed—but bigoted Israel was intent upon extending her borders by destroying all other nations, not on being a blessing by making God known to all the earth. Because Israel was disobedient to her Divine commission, she was swallowed up by the "monster", Babylon. This figure of Babylon as a devouring monster is used in Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel: compare the figurative language of Jeremiah 51.34 and 44: Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath like a monster, swallowed me up, he hath filled his maw with my delicacies; he hath cast me out. "It was as natural, as inevitable", writes Mrs. Louise Seymour Houghton, "that a writer of parable immediately after the return should figure Babylon as a monster that had swallowed up Israel and had been forced to cast him up again, as that Bunyan in his great parable should figure the Church of Rome as a superannuated giant, sitting impotent in his cave, biting his fingers at those who passed by." In exile Israel turned to Jehovah and then was delivered from the "monster". But after the return, Israel still failed to carry out the Divine commission which had not been revoked. To teach the duty of Israel, chapters three and four were written.

Dr. George Adam Smith points out that the abrupt close of the story at the very moment at which its moral is obvious, is characteristic of all parables, and adds: "So obvious and so natural are the symptoms of the parable, that we really sin against the intention of the author, and the purpose of the Spirit who inspired him, when we willfully interpret the book as real history."

In a recent story of Ingraham Lovell, the heroine, who has grown to womanhood in complete seclusion, is told for the first time the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. She cannot grasp its lesson, and is greatly excited over what she calls the unfairness of the householder until she is informed that "it was not an actual occurrence, but merely a parable—a lesson!" "Oh, it never happened, then?" she exclaims. "So of course it does not matter." We, who have always known that Christ's parables were not actual occurrences, can see the beauty and force and truth of their teachings. Why should we not see the same in an Old Testament parable? Why should we think, if the story of Jonah is not an actual occurrence, "then, of course, it does not matter," and spurn its lessons because it did not all literally happen?

Truth is greater than a particular truth. If the parable of the Prodigal Son referred to a definitely known youth in Jerusalem, then it would be a particular truth; but infinitely greater than this is the truth of the parable which does refer to the life of humanity in all ages and lands.

The Book of Jonah was written by a prophet, though he wrote in parable. Read in the light of its meaning one understands Professor Cornill's enthusiastic appreciation of the Book: "This apparently trivial Book is one of the deepest and grandest that was ever written, and I should like to say to every one who approaches it, take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

As Literature. "The literary form in which these suggestive experiences of Jonah are set forth is at once simple and striking—a narrative of successive incidents with just enough of connected circumstances to point a moral. Nothing can be simpler than this mere series of pictures, thrown, as it were, on canvas

by the stereopticon, and nothing more striking than these successive scenes—the storm, the sea-monster, the sheltering gourd—and then the abruptness with which the spectacle ends, and vivid imagination gives place to calm reflection."

As a satire upon Jewish narrowness it is wonderfully keen and cutting, and yet genial withal. The Editor of the "Biblical World" avers that "there is no single piece of literature of the entire Old Testament which is more artistic in its form, more pedagogical in its method, or more logical in its thought."

Lessons for Today. How the truth is embodied in the Book is of secondary importance: what the truth is is of primary consequence. Whether history or story, prosaic fact or poetic allegory, it is a wonderful Book, anticipating as it does in the Old Testament the Gospel of Christ. It is the one great missionary Book of the Old Testament. They realize this today in heathen lands where it is by no means uncommon for the missionaries to translate first the Psalter and perhaps Genesis and then to translate the Book of Jonah. They do this because they know that Jonah's message comes home to their converts with peculiar power. It should come to us with the same authority and power. Throughout the Book there is the call to service, to missionary activity. Far more responsible are we in this day and generation for the evangelization of the world than were the Israelites for the spread of their knowledge of God among their enemies.

The lessons of the universal dominion of God and of the universal brotherhood of men are writ large. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is there a broader conception of the tender mercy of God toward all mankind. When the ignorant sailors, who in their terror at the storm had called on their gods, turned to Jehovah and promised to worship him, they were delivered. When the disobedient prophet prayed to Jehovah, he was delivered. And when the wicked Ninevites cried mightily unto Jehovah, and turned from their evil way, Jehovah delivered them. God's mercy and love extend alike to ignorant sailors, disobedient prophet, and wicked heathen—in a word, to all humanity. Divine pity and tenderness breathes throughout the story, but most of all in those beautiful closing words where they are given to the helpless children and animals in the city of Nineveh. The Book of Jonah tells in story what Faber sings in song:

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea:
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

You have seen a double rainbow: the one bow bright and clear, the other back of it fainter and dimmer, but a beautiful reflection of the same glorious colorings. The Book of Jonah is the dimmer bow that nevertheless reflects the great truth so clearly seen in the bright bow of the Gospels, where we hear that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Prophet Daniel. Ezekiel 14.14, 20 refers to Daniel together with Noah and Job as an example of a man noted for his righteousness. The connection of Daniel's name with the name of Noah and Job seems singular if the reference is to the prophet who according to the Book of Daniel was a young contemporary of the prophet Ezekiel himself.

Daniel in the Book bearing his name was a descendant of one of the highest families in Judah (1.3), who was carried captive to Babylon when but a boy according to Jerome—in the third year of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, 605 B.C. There he was educated, gained favor with King Nebuchadnezzar, and was appointed by him governor of the province of Babylon. Under Nebuchadnezzar's immediate successors we lose sight of him till the time of Belshazzar. He lived

till the reign of Cyrus the Great. A tomb in Susa is claimed by Mohammedans as his tomb.

The Author of the Book of Daniel. The Book takes its name from that of its hero. The first or narrative part is written in the third person, the hero is spoken of historically; the visions of the last part are those of Daniel, narrated in the first person, but twice introduced by a verse in the third person, 7.1 and 10.1. It does not appear that Daniel was the author of the Book nor that the unknown prophet who wrote it intended it to be received as the work of Daniel.

Views in Regard to the Book and its Date. In the Jewish canon the Book of Daniel is not placed with the prophetical books, but with "The Writings", between Esther and Ezra. That it was not included among the "Latter Prophets" is thought to indicate that it could not have been written in the sixth century. No satisfactory reason has been given for the fact that it was written in two languages, 2.4b-7.28 being in Aramaic, and the earlier and later parts of the Book in Hebrew. (In references *b* stands for *second clause.*)

By some scholars the Book is considered wholly historical and is held to have been written at the time of the events narrated. Other scholars hold that its basis is historical, but that it was written to encourage the Jews when under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes they were passing through furnaces of affliction. As early as the third century of our era Porphyry maintained that the Book was written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. By yet other scholars it is considered a *mashal* or parable written for didactic purposes. There are difficulties connected with each of these points of view, but many of them disappear when we think of the Book as a product of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, who ruled Syria from 175-164 B.C.

Some Troublesome Historical Statements. Several statements in the Book that have seemed erroneous and have led many to reject it, have been satisfactorily explained by recent discoveries in ancient inscriptions. Others still await solution. New discoveries are constantly proving false the assumption that the Scriptures are in error where secular history does not corroborate them. For example, the Book gives Belshazzar as the name of the last Chaldean king of Babylon, but we know from secular history that the last king was Nabonidus. Some have therefore declared that Belshazzar never existed. Then came the discovery in the ruins of a temple at Mugheir (Ur) of an inscription giving an account of the restoration of the temple of Sin, the Moon-god, by Nabonidus (called Nabonahid) in which these words occur: "As for me, Nabonidus, King of Babylon, from sin against thy great divinity save me, and a life of remote days give as a gift; and as for Belshazzar, the eldest son, the offspring of my heart, the fear of thy great divinity cause thou to exist in his heart, and not let sin possess him." Belshazzar, then, was the heir to the throne of Babylon, although the monuments do not indicate that he ever reigned. The Book of Daniel calls him King of Babylon; he seems to have been the commander of the army, and he may have governed Babylon as viceroy and have been popularly known as king, or he may have actually shared the throne with his father Nabonidus.

The statement in 5.31 that it was Darius the Mede (not Cyrus nor Gobryas) who received the Kingdom after the overthrow of Belshazzar has caused much trouble. No ruler by the name of Darius, till the third one after Cyrus, is referred to by any historian or by any inscription. Could he have been a vassal of Cyrus? Contract tables have been found which speak of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, as "the King of Babylon" in the first year of Cyrus, and call the latter "the King of countries": perhaps Darius was another such "King of Babylon", a vassal of Cyrus, or possibly Darius is another name for Gobryas, Cyrus's general to whom he entrusted the government.

The Message of Daniel. The Book consists of two distinct portions, the first in narrative form containing a series of stories about Daniel or his companions; the second in prophetic form containing a series of visions of Daniel.

We know that the exile lasted seventy years from the Earlier Captivity, but we have no Book in the Bible which gives an account of the life in Babylon; as Professor Moulton has said, the history of Israel during the Exile is in the position of a river which runs for a time underground before

it returns to view. From the Book of Daniel we learn that in their exile the Israelites remained true to Jehovah. The subject of the prophetical portion is the expectation of "the last days", the Golden Age, that is, for Israel. It is often called "The Apocalypse of the Old Testament". The Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse of the New Testament, adopts the imagery of Daniel in its visions concerning the deliverance of the glorified Christ in the last days. "In the most skilful way the Book of Daniel reaches its splendid climax. The author shows his readers how the fidelity of men like Daniel and his friends was rewarded by deliverance from the lions and the flames, and then takes them down through the centuries in which successive empires were all unconsciously working out his predetermined plan, and on to the darkest days in history—so dark, because the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of God was so soon to dawn. Let them only be patient a little longer, 12.12, and their enemies will be crushed, and the Kingdom of God will come—that Kingdom which shall know no end."

The visions that occupy the second half of the Book are different from those of other Old Testament Prophets. They have little bearing on Daniel's circumstances in Babylon, and are remarkably circumstantial and minute as regards the distant future. If the Book dates from the close of the period to which its visions refer, the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, then the visions are "past history thrown by the author into the guise of ancient prediction." Then, the unknown prophet chose this method as a forcible way in which to express his truth that everything that had happened was in accord with Divine foreknowledge and purpose.

Outline of the Book.

I. Narrative Section. Experiences of Daniel and his companions, 1-6.
   1. Daniel and his companions refuse to defile themselves by eating the king's food, Chapter 1.
   2. Daniel interprets the king's dream, Chapter 2.
   3. Daniel's friends refuse to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, and are miraculously saved in the furnace of fire, Chapter 3.
   4. Daniel interprets another royal dream, Chapter 4.
   5. Daniel interprets the mysterious handwriting on the wall as a prediction of the overthrow of Belshazzar's kingdom, Chapter 5.
   6. Daniel saved in the den of lions, Chapter 6.

II. Prophetic Section. Visions of Daniel, 7-12.
   1. The Four Beasts, Chapter 7.
   2. The Ram and the Goat, Chapter 8.
   3. The Seventy Weeks, Chapter 9.
   4. The Kings of the North and South, Chapters 10.12.

As Literature. The two parts of the Book are wholly different. In the first part the stories about Daniel and his fellow-exiles in Babylon are simply told, yet with great dramatic power. The second part is rhetorical: peculiar to it are its symbolisms, imagery, angels—the sense of mystery that pervades it.

Lessons for Today. The truth in regard to the date of the Book may never positively be known, but the truth of its vividly taught lessons need never be lost. The Book is emphatically "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Daniel is one of the rare Old Testament characters without guile; no sins are graven on his escutcheon, as Shakespeare's words—a Daniel come to judgment—bear witness. In him we have an example of steadfast fidelity to the dictates of conscience, no matter what the consequences, of perfect self-control and of unflinching courage —"Dare to be a Daniel" has become a proverb—and of sublime faith in God and tranquil trust in his overruling care. Then there are the great lessons: "that God presides over the history of the world; that the Gentile nations as well as the Jews have always been under his control; that the succession of human empires is ordained by him; that he permits the pride and the fury of oppressors for a time, but humbles them in the end, and saves his own; that his kingdom will come at length, and will endure forever; that faithfulness and constancy to him lead to a life beyond death, and to an eternal reward."

THE PSALMS

The Title of the Book. The Hebrew title of the Book is *Tehillim*, Praises, or Book of Praises. Our title of *Psalter* means Harp, or Stringed Instrument, being derived from the title in the Greek Version of the Bible—Ψαλτήριον μετ' ᾠδαῖς, The Harp with Songs. Each title is applicable to the majority of the Psalms only, for not all are hymns of praise nor were all intended to be sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument.

The Titles of the Psalms. The superscriptions, or headlines, of the individual Psalms classify them as to character of composition (a Psalm, a Song, a Prayer), and as to authorship (David, Asaph, Sons of Korah), and associate them with some special event (At the Dedication of the House, When he fled from Absalom). Then there are also liturgical directions (Praise with a Loud Voice, To the Chief Musician). These titles are in no sense an integral part of the Psalms. They are later than the Psalms themselves and were added by unknown editors, possibly two centuries before Christ. Comparing our Authorized and Revised Versions, we see that the titles differed sometimes in the Hebrew and Greek Versions, which were the sources of our English translations. That they are sometimes unreliable can be readily seen. For instance, the Greek superscription of Psalm XCVI is "When the house (*i.e.* the Temple) was being built after the captivity; a song of David." That is, the Psalm is said to have been written after the Exile, when the second Temple was being built, and is at the same time ascribed to David.

Psalms of David. Some years ago a French composer set the forty-sixth Psalm to music, and received royalties through the Society of French Composers. Shortly after a new treasurer had assumed duties, Mr. Florent Schmitt, the composer, called to inquire why he had received but half the amount due him. "Where is the rest of the money?" he asked. "The rest? What rest? That is your share," the treasurer replied. "But that is only half the amount of the royalties." "Ah, but how about your librettist? He gets his share, I suppose," the treasurer returned. "My librettist?" asked the composer blankly. "But certainly, my dear sir, your librettist, Monsieur David."

In these days there are some who are prone to go to the other extreme and give the Sweet Singer of Israel no share at all in the collection of Psalms. That David did not write all the Psalms, we know from their contents. In the titles of the Psalms seventy-three are ascribed to him, that is, each is called "Psalm of David." Just what the phrase means there is room for doubt, however.

The same Hebrew preposition translated *of* here, is translated *for* in "For the chief musician," etc., where authorship is out of the question. Tradition points to David as the founder of Psalmody in Israel. That David was a poet we know from his beautiful lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 S. 1), and we can be certain he was the author of some of the Psalms. Dr. Lyman Abbott recalls the title of a hymn-book which he used as a youth—"Watts and Select"—and says that the Book of Psalms might be called "David and Select," though the "Select" includes the major part of the Psalms.

Authorship of the Psalms. In the titles, besides the seventy-three Psalms ascribed to David, twelve are assigned to Asaph, nine to the sons of Korah (a musical guild in existence in the time of Nehemiah) two to Solomon, one each to Moses, Herman, Ethan, "The old man", "The afflicted one", and forty-nine are anonymous. The forty-nine anonymous Psalms Jewish commentators term "the orphans".

Beyond question, the Psalter is a growth; it has had a long history. It is sometimes called a "Bible within a Bible", and just as the Bible is a collection of sixty-six books, written by many men, throughout a long period of time, so the Psalter is a collection of one hundred and fifty hymns written by many inspired poets during a period of over eight centuries. The original "Davidic Psalter" has strains of the true Davidic melody, but the songs, many of them, have been altered and adapted to the progressive needs of congregational worship, and hymn after hymn has been added.

Although we can not know who were the authors of all the Psalms and under what circumstances they were written, yet there are many indications in the Psalms themselves, historical allusions, which give some clue to the circumstances under which they were written. And as Dr. Henry van Dyke, in "The Story of the Psalms," declares, every point of contact which we can find between these songs and the lives of real men, every circumstance that links them to actual human experience, helps to illuminate and vivify their meaning. "Just as we gain a new insight into 'God moves in a mysterious way' from the knowledge of poor Cowper's attempt at suicide, and a better understanding of 'One there is above all others' from the story of John Newton's strange life, so these ancient Hebrew Psalms must be more valuable to us when, out of the far-distant past, we can catch some echoes, however faint, of their human histories."

Date of the Psalms. According to some authorities the Psalms were the hymn-book of the Second Temple. We do not know who brought them all together into one Book, nor when it was done, nor do we know when the individual Psalms were composed. The earliest date back to David and his time, the latest come from the time after the return from the Babylonian captivity, and some of them, no doubt, from the time of the Maccabees, and they cover in all a period of about 850 years in the Hebrew nation.

Divisions of the Psalms. The Psalter consists of five Books or collections of Psalms, each of which closes with the doxology. Our Revised Version marks the divisions as they are made in "the last edition" of the Psalms, the Septuagint Version of the second century B.C. According to the Midrash, these five books were arranged in imitation of the five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch). For, says the Midrash, God made Israel a present of his Torah (Law) consisting of five Books: so Israel presented to God a hymnal of praise, also consisting of five Books. "The Pentateuch states God's will for man; and the Psalter is man's reply to it, man's adoration of God."

Within these groups are smaller groups, such as Psalms of Ascent, or Pilgrim Psalms (CXX-CXXXIV), the Psalms of David, Psalms of the Korahites (XLII-XLIX), Psalms of Asaph (LXXIII-LXXXIII), the Hallelujah Psalms (CXI-CXIII; CXLVI-CL).

Themes. The Psalms are the great hymns which the people sang in their temple-worship, and some of our best-loved hymns are but variations of them. They are "the songs of the heart", the expressions of actual experiences, sprung from the heart of the poets, voicing humility and confession, thanksgiving and praise, fear and hope, anxieties and aspirations and triumphs—all the deep and bitter and sweet experiences of life. Above all else they express the attitude of the human soul Godwards. Just as there is in every bulb a heliotropic tendency—a power which impels the growth of the bulb sunwards—so there is in the heart of every Psalm a *Theotropic* tendency—an impulse Godwards that is abundantly satisfied. Diverse as are their themes, they can be grouped into Psalms of Adoration, Reflection, Thanksgiving, Petition, Worship, Historical Psalms, Imprecatory Psalms, Penitential Psalms, Royal Psalms, Messianic Psalms.

Characteristics of the Psalms. How shall one mention special characteristics of the Psalms, when they are so wonderfully diverse? Their marvelous variety Dr. J. T. McFarland thus voices: The Psalter contains great mountain hymns, voices which call like bugle notes from the mighty hills; and it has sublime sea songs that have in them the breath of the great winds and the swing of the great waves. There are psalms which have the impetuous rush and power of the cataract, and others which tinkle and sing like rivulets running over golden sands or among the roots of grass. We hear in these Psalms sometimes the thunder crash and the majesty of the passing storm; and again we have the quiet of the cricket's chirp, and the dewy peace of rosy morns and the lulling drone of summer eves. Some of them speak the voice of war, and make us hear the clash of spears, the shoutings of the captains, the neighing of the battle horse, and feel all the passion and power of strife. There are songs of joy, and hope, and triumph, in which the soul exults and sings and jubilates; and there are songs of sorrow, and despondency, and despair, which sob and moan and cry with unutterable heaviness and pain. There are Psalms of calm and radiant assurance, breathings of a pure spirit walking

on heights of divine communion, strong in the consciousness of rectitude and glad with the joy of the divine approval; and there are lamentations of the penitent lying prone upon his face, covered with sackcloth and ashes, sick unto death with the sense of guilt and pollution, entreating the mercy and compassion of God. Is there any book in all the world like unto this? It is the hymnal for the human heart. It sings for childhood and old age, for the rich and the poor, for sovereigns and subjects, for the strong and the weak, for the well and the sick, for the victor and the vanquished, for the glad and the sad, for the sinful and the holy, for the living and the dying. Thank God for the Book of Psalms!

Yet with all their variety of theme and language, there are three great qualities which distinguish them, and are "evidences", Dr. van Dyke writes, "not only of sublime genius, but also of spiritual inspiration. The first of these is the deep and genuine love of nature. The second is their passionate sense of the beauty of holiness. The third is their intense joy in God." Especially striking is their expression of the sacred duty of joyousness, joyousness in God. "Rejoice in the Lord . . . Make a cheerful noise . . . . In thy presence is fulness of joy . . . Hallelujah!" True, the deepest, somberest notes are not lacking in the Psalter, but nowhere else do the joybells ring so loudly as here. In Dean Stanley's words: "Be happy, cheerful, and thankful, as ever we can, we cannot go beyond the Psalms. They laugh, they shout, they cry, they scream for joy. There is a wild exhilaration which rings through them."

Then there are the daring flights of imagination, for the Psalms are "strong with emotion and nervous with intuition. At one time the reader is swept along the mountain heights in a storm of hot passion; at another he is led gently along the shore of the eternal peace. Everywhere the atmosphere is mystic, and the world is felt to be full of God."

Notice in how many of the Psalms the heart of the Psalm is stated in the opening words, and how the conclusion is in the nature of a vow. Mr. John A. Hutton, writing in "At Close Quarters," sees a necessity for this in considering how the Psalms came to be written. "Every Psalm is a soliloquy. In every Psalm we have a man wrestling with himself, at least for a time, in the dark. There he sits thinking, thinking about himself, about something that has happened, until at last light breaks upon him. He sees his way; or he gives up thinking because his mind simply refuses to agonize further—for there is a limit beyond which we cannot endure another moment's distress;—or the man remembers something which he had all the time been leaving out of his argument, something which changes everything, the sense of God. At this point his soul swings round into peace and quietness, that peace and quietness which we have, no matter how difficult life may still be for us, when we see our way, when we are ready to *act*. And it usually happens that in the opening words of the Psalm the man puts down this resolution, this new point of view which visited him in his distress and opened up a way back to healthy and faithful human living. And again the conclusion of a Psalm is given in the words 'I will'; 'I will lift up mine eyes'; 'I will remember'; 'I will say to my soul', and so on. In short, the conclusion of many of the Psalms, and in almost all of them in which you have the soul of a man wrestling with some shadow of itself, is of the nature of a vow. Relief comes to him in his lonely distress when suddenly he sees something which he never saw before, or which he had forgotten. And in a moment, and with his whole being, he perceives that that for him is the way."

The Imprecatory Psalms. One of the characters in a recent story in the "American Magazine" "'lowed it made the goose-bumps rise on his back in June to walk along the road below Harpeth's hill and hear him up there in the corn-field quotin' King David's blasphemin' Psalms ag'in' the Hittites as if he was prayin'. And Jonathan Snow was so afeerd of him he'd come a mile out of his way to keep from meetin' him and riskin' his spiritual peace of mind ag'in' his selections from the Old Testament." Imprecatory phrases flash out in many an otherwise tender Psalm, but there are certain Psalms (58, 69 and 109) to which the title "Imprecatory or Cursing Psalms" is fitly given, for they breathe the very spirit of fierce hatred and revenge, and invoke the most terrible judgments upon the heads of enemies. The Psalms are the passion-

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ate expression of men who loved justice and righteousness, and always those upon whom vengeance is invoked were grossly guilty; we are glad, moreover, to recall that, as a rule, the hatred is not that of one individual against another, but of the Church against her enemies, and sometimes the violent outbursts are prayers for vengeance upon those who have insulted God or his cause. They teach not only the terribleness of such tumultuous passions, but the virtue of righteous indignation, the majesty of Divine Justice and the fact of Divine retribution.

The Songs of Degrees. There are fifteen Psalms (120-134) which are grouped together and are called Songs of Degrees. The title "A Song of Degrees" is found in the heading of each in our Authorized Version. They are obviously designed for part-singing in the temple worship, being marked by solo and chorus, recitative and address, and numerous antiphonal features. Why they are called "Songs of the Degrees or Ascents" no one knows. One explanation is that they were sung on the return from Babylon to Jerusalem, when the Israelites went up from the low-lying lands of Babylonia to the heights of the Holy City. The usual explanation is that they were sung by the Israelites as they went up to Jerusalem to attend the three great annual feasts. Then it has been conjectured that the word translated "ascent" is a musical direction, meaning that the Psalms were to be sung in a loud voice; and again that they were sung as "stations" on the fifteen steps which led from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men. Dr. J. W. Thirtle has written a book upon "Old Testament Problems" in which he sets forth his interesting theory that these songs were intended to recall certain great events in the life of King Hezekiah, "degrees" incident to his career, and he calls special attention to the passage in Isa, 38 where Hezekiah, after having received assurance of the extension of his days, exclaims: Jehovah is my Savior: Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the House of Jehovah.

Messianic Psalms. It is written in the Psalms concerning me, said Jesus of himself, Luke 24.44. Rev. F. B. Meyer writes concerning the Messianic Psalms: "There are some Psalms that are entirely Messianic, they can have no useful reference but to the Lord Jesus; others have a primary reference to some figure or event in Hebrew story, from which, however, they soon pass on, to find a richer and wider fulfilment in him to whose person and work all the rays of Scripture converge."

Outline of the Psalter. It is impossible to make any outline of these poems, other than that of the five books into which they are divided in the Hebrew, in which Eusebius declares "the Psalms are disposed according to a law of inward affinity." Any other division is only arbitrary, for the Psalms are too varied to lend themselves to classification. The "dominant notes" below are Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's, in which he seeks to express the attitude of the Psalms as Psalms of worship.

I. Book I. Psalms I-XLI.
   The dominant thought in this book is that of God as Jehovah, the Helper of his people. The Psalms are songs of varying emotion and differing condition, but all express themselves in harmony with this note.

II. Book II. Psalms XLII-LXXII.
   The dominant thought is that of the might of God realized by his people, and manifest through them. The worship is that of Jehovah as the wonder-working God.

III. Book III. Psalms LXXIII-LXXIX.
   The dominant thought is that of the worship of God under all circumstances.

IV. Book IV. Psalms XC-CVI.
   In this book the worship of Jehovah is rendered by all people. There are songs of his government and administration, for which the heart is lifted in adoration.

V. Book V. Psalms CVII-CL.
   In this book the worship of Jehovah is consummated. It rises in volume and beauty until in the closing words of the doxology the ultimate purpose is declared: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Hallelujah."

The Psalms as Literature. The Psalms belong to the world's greatest poetry. Coleridge defines poetry as the best words in their best order, and Matthew Arnold defines it as simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things. In the light of these definitions, we see that the Psalms are poetry, and as rendered in the Revised Version we see their metrical form.

"The words are as simple and unaffected as human words can be, for it is the genius of Hebrew poetry to lay little stress upon artifices of rhythm," writes Dr. J. E. McFadyen. "By its simple device of parallelism, it suggests a rhythm profounder than the sound of any words—the response of thought to thought, the calling of deep to deep, the solemn harmonies that run through the universe. Whether the second thought of a verse is co-ordinate with the first, as—

> Let us break their bands asunder,
> And cast away their cords from us, II.3.

or contrasted with it, as—

> Jehovah knows the way of the righteous
> But the way of the ungodly shall perish, I.6,

the resulting parallelism is essentially simple, and the Hebrew poet can express his profoundest thoughts and feelings with lucidity and freedom. It is the depth and sincerity of its emotion, coupled with this unrivaled simplicity of expression that has given the Psalter its abiding place in the religious history of humanity."

The beauty of the simple diction, the charm of the parallelism, or thought rhythm, the perfection of the metaphors of the Psalms are abundantly seen when one attempts to paraphrase one of them. Other words are worse words, the parallelism is inimitable, and the metaphors are so perfect in their directness and force that nothing else can take their place.

Written of the twenty-third Psalm, these words are applicable to nearly all: "Simply as a piece of rhetoric this Psalm is superb. The rhythm of it is music. The language of it is music. The thought of it is music. From its opening words to its closing words it is all music."

"Simply as a stimulus to the imagination, as furnishing striking and beautiful examples of all the forms and figures of poetic speech—and especially in that fine quality of spiritual insight and through-sight which sees the hidden meanings in all common things and discerns a divine drift and purpose in all events—there is no field of literature quite so rich and vitalizing as the Psalms."

Lessons for Today. The Psalter is a book which man can never outgrow; its poems are "songs of the heart"; and the human heart is ever the same. It is the best-loved book of the Old Testament, the only one that is sometimes bound up with the New as if belonging of right with the light and knowledge that have come through Christ and the Gospels. The marvelous hold that the Psalms have had upon the heart of humanity, is often told: let us hear it again in the words of Dr. Henry van Dyke. "With the music of the Psalms the shepherds and ploughmen cheered their hearts in ancient Palestine; and to the same music the Gallic boatmen kept time as they rowed their barges against the swift current of the Rhone. A Psalm supplied the daily grace with which the Christians blessed their food; and the same Psalm was repeated by the communicants as they went to the Lord's Table. St. Chrysostom fleeing into exile; Martin Luther going to meet all possible devils at Worms; George Wishart facing the plagues at Dundee; Wycliffe on his sick-bed, surrounded by his enemies; John Bunyan in Bedford jail; William Wilberforce in a crisis when all his most strenuous efforts seemed in vain, and his noble plans were threatened with ruin—all stayed their hearts and renewed their courage with verses from the Psalms. The Huguenots at Dieppe marched to victory chanting the sixty-eighth Psalm; and the same stately war-song sounded over the field of Dunbar. It was with the fifth verse of the thirty-first Psalm that our Lord Jesus Christ commended his soul into the hands of God; and with the same words, St. Stephen, St. Polycarp, St. Basil, St. Bernard, St. Louis, Huss, Columbus, Luther and Melancthon—yea, and many

more saints of whom no man knoweth—have bid their farewell to earth and their welcome to heaven."

The Psalter is the world's Hymn-Book. From the time that the Passover Psalms (or Hallel, Psalms 113-118) were the hymn of the Last Supper (Mt. 26.30) to the present day, they have been sung wherever Christians meet together. In the first centuries of the Christian era they were sung at the Love-feasts, and were the morning and evening hymns of the early Christians. Of the other Scriptures, says Theodoret in the fifth century, the generality of men know next to nothing, but the Psalms you will find again and again repeated in private houses, in market-places, in streets, by those who have learned them by heart, and who soothe themselves by their Divine melody. "There are great anthems and choruses suited to those most stately occasions when a nation would express through the voices of ten thousand singers its most exalted sentiments; and it contains tender trills of song, sweet and sacred heart melodies, which timid souls most love to sing in solitude."

The Psalter is the world's Book of Devotion. It has determined the language of praise and prayer. "How one the soul is!" the great missionary to Mongolia, James Gilmour, wrote in his diary. "When dull and cold and dead, and feeling as if I could not pray, I turn to the Psalms. When most in the spirit, the Psalms meet almost all the needs of expression." And in a letter to another missionary, he wrote: "When I feel I cannot make headway in devotion I open in the Psalms, and push out in my canoe, and let myself be carried along in the stream of devotion which flows through the whole book. The current always sets toward God, and in most places is strong and deep." None of us could have written the Psalms, for they are the words of men inspired, but all of us can echo their sublime words and it is a witness of the Spirit of God in our hearts.

The Psalms voice the feelings of every soul in its every relation to God. As long as sin and confession and pardon and peace are man's portion; as long as the heart knows anguish and disappointment and pain and defeat and tragedy; as long as the spirit hopes and rejoices and exults, prays and trusts, as long as death prevails and the hope of immortal life is undimmed; so long these matchless expressions of the deepest and sweetest, loftiest and most spiritual experiences of human life will comfort and console and uplift. In greater measure than in reading any other part of the Bible, in reading the Psalms we seem to be alone with God, and there comes to us also the peaceful assurance of the Psalmist's cry—O God, thou art my God!

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CANAAN,
AS DIVIDED AMONG
THE TWELVE TRIBES
ENGLISH MILES
0 10 20 30 40
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
R. Leontes (Litany)
Abel-beth-maachah
Laish or Dan
Baal Gad
MT. LEBANON
ANTI LIBANUS
R. Abana
DAMASCUS
MT. HERMON (SION SIRION)
DAN
Kedesh
Hazor
ASHER
NAPHTALI
Geshurites
Waters of Merom
Abdon
Achzib
Dabbasheth
Accho
R. Jordan
MANASSEH (Beyond Jordan)
Hannathon
Cabul
ZEBULON
Migdalel
Rimmon
Beth-arbel
Hammoth
Bethlehem
Golan
Aphek
Ashteroth Karnaim
Sea of Chinnereth
MT. TABOR
Edrei
MT. CARMEL
R. Kishon
Valley of Jezreel
Endor
Shunem
Dor?
Hadad Rimmon
Jezreel
Tannach
ISSACHAR
Bethshan
LAND OF TOB
MT. GILBOA
Megiddo
Engannim
Dothan
Jabesh-gilead
GAD
MANASSEH
Thebez
Brook Cherith
Tirzah
Succoth
Ramoth Gilead
MT. EBAL
Sheehem
MT. GERIZIM
Brook Kanah
River Jordan
R. Jabbok
MT. GILEAD
Mahanaim
Plain of Sharon
Japho
Ono
Shiloh
EPHRAIM
MOUNT EPHRAIM
Beth Dagon
Gibeah
Baal Hazor
Rabbath-ammon
Bethel
Ai
Rimmon
Jazer
Beeroth
Michmash
Gittaim
Ekron
Ramah
Abel-Shittim
Jabneh
Gibeon
Jericho
Beth-haran
Ajalon
Anathoth
Beth-jeshimoth
Zorah
MT. OF OLIVES
Elealeh
Ashdod
Timnath
Zanoah
JERUSALEM
MT. NEBO
Heshbon
Beth-shemesh
Bethlehem
Baal-meon
Askelon
Jarmuth
Gath
Socoh
Etam
Kidron
REUBEN
JUDAH
Tekoa
Mareshah
Beth-zur
Eglon
Nezib
Lachish
Hebron
Bezer
Gaza
Adoraim
(Hazazon Tamar)
SALT SEA
SEA OF THE PLAIN
MOUNTAINS OF ABARIM
Dibon
Debir
Ziph
Engedi
Aroer
Carmel
Socoh
Maon
R. Arnon
Gerar
En Rimmon
Eshtemoa
Jattir
Kerioth
Ar (Rabbath) Moab
Arad
Beer Sheba
Kir Moab
Brook Zered
Aroer
Wilderness of Zin
Valley of Salt
Ziklag?
GREAT SEA
PHILISTIA
SIMEON
MOAB
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FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I—JANUARY 3

GOD'S PATIENCE WITH ISRAEL

Golden Text

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. Hosea 14.4

LESSON Judges 2.7-19 MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

7 And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel.

11 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim; 12 and they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them; and they provoked Jehovah to anger. 13 And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn unto them: and they were sore distressed.

16 And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them. 17 And yet they hearkened not unto their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah; *but* they did not so. 18 And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented Jehovah because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. 19 But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their doings, nor from their stubborn way.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

7-9. Compare the account given in Joshua 24.29-33.—*Jehovah.* Hebrew "Yahweh". Throughout the Authorized Version this name is translated LORD, but this is not a proper name of the Supreme Being, and it is given in England to a titled nobleman, and also to any one in authority, as when Shakespeare says, "But now I am the lord of this fair mansion." Jewish superstition regarded the name Yahweh (Jehovah) as too sacred to be uttered or even written in full, but the translators of our Revised Version have rightly refused to be governed by such a superstition.—*The elders.* The men, (usually old) who were at the head of the families and clans, "the natural guardians of Israelitish custom, law and religion."—*All the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel.* See "Before the Time of the Judges", p. 57 of this *Guide.*—*Timnath heres.* See the Geographical Background, p. 58 of this *Guide.*

10. *Generation.* Of Joshua and the elders.—*Were gathered unto their fathers.* Died and were buried with their ancestors.—*That knew not Jehovah.* In the day of good things there is a forgetfulness of evil things; and in the day of evil things a man will not remember things that are good (*Ecclesiasticus* 11.25).

Knowing that they had lost their knowledge of the true God we expect the statement given in the next verse, that they worshipped idols, for a loss of the vision of God has always been followed by idolatry—among enlightened people of today as well as in the past.

11-23. The remainder of the main part of the Book of Judges, as far as the sixteenth chapter, is an expansion of these verses: see this *Guide*, p. 58.

11. *Did that which was evil.* In the original it is *the* evil. The verb indicates that it happened over and over again: Israel kept on doing evil.—*Served the Baalim. Baalim* is the plural of *Baal:* Baalim were the numerous native gods worshipped by the Canaanites. "The worship of Baal was grossly licentious, fatal to the morals of all who took part in it, and therefore rightly an abomination in the eyes of the Jews".

12. *They forsook Jehovah.* "The grand design of revelation is to keep man in contact with the living God—the eternally existent, righteous, and loving One" (*Watkinson*).—*Who brought them out of the land of Egypt.* Note how the writer of Judges emphasizes Israel's ingratitude.

13. *The Ashtaroth.* The word is plural, the feminine counterpart of "the Baalim". Ashtoreth (singular) is the Hebrew name for the Phœnician goddess Astarte, or the Babylonian goddess Ishtar.

14. *The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel.* See below. Here as in verse 15—the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil—and in verse 18—it repented Jehovah because of their groaning—God is conceived as a sort of magnified man: it is as if the Israelites of this early period said, Let us make God in our image, after our likeness.

15. *As Jehovah had said.* See Lev. 26 and Dt. 28, 16-17. *Jehovah raised up judges.* For a knowledge of the office of the judges, see ¶ 2, p. 25 of this *Guide.*—*Went awhoring after other gods.* They deserted Jehovah, to whom as a people they were espoused (Jer. 2.2), and followed other gods.—*And bowed themselves unto them.* Prostrated themselves, probably touching the ground with their foreheads, as do the Mohammedans at this present time.—*Out of the way wherein their fathers walked.* See ¶ 1, p. 57 of this *Guide.*

19. *When the judge was dead, then they turned back.* "When the judge was dead, they looked upon the dam which checked the stream of their idolatry as removed, and then it flowed down with so much the more fury (*Matthew Henry*). For instances of this, see 3.11; 4.1; 5.31; 6.1; 8.33.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

13. *And served Baal and the Ashtaroth.* A company of French archæologists excavating some tombs on the southeastern slope of the Temple Hill in 1913

Ancient Medals Representing Astarte and Ashtoreth

found fragments of pottery apparently dating from about 3000 B.C. and among them broken figures of Ashtoreth.

14. *The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel.* An oriental judge when condemning an offender looks upon him with fierce anger, and an oriental can show anger in a more intense way than can a westerner. Jehovah is here the Judge, and the writer attributes to him the same feeling that an oriental judge has always exhibited by his looks, if not by his words.

17. *They turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked.* In oriental thought generally the "way" is the path or road that has been prepared for travel by those who would go aright. The idea of a road as a highway of God's kingdom shows itself all along in the Bible record. Again and again fidelity to God's service is spoken of as continuing in "the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in". *Dr. H. Clay Trumbull,* in *Oriental Social Life.*

Golden Text. *I will heal their backsliding.* This figure of speech from the words of Hosea was readily understood by his hearers, for they were a people accustomed literally to backsliding as they trudged over paths made slippery and rocks worn smooth by the countless sure-footed animals that had clambered over them. The people traveled barefoot, or else wore flat-soled sandals or perhaps shoes without heels, just as they do today, and they must have slipped backward repeatedly when toiling up the hills made soft by the rains.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What part of the Bible did our 1913 course cover? How many books are there in the Bible? What do we call the first six Books (which we studied in 1913)? With what accounts does Genesis begin? Name the patriarchs. Who was called the "Friend of God" and why? For what is Isaac noted? Jacob? Joseph? How did it happen that the children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt? Who freed them? Where were forty years spent? What were the great lessons learned during those forty years? Who led them into the Promised Land?

Before the Time of the Judges. The people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel. But there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought in Israel. Thus the writer of Judges, in our text for today, refers to the earlier history of the Israelites. That earlier history, the work which Jehovah wrought in Israel, is the background of all our year's course; without some knowledge concerning it we shall not rightly understand the lessons which follow.

Jehovah is our Guide; he led our ancestors in all their wanderings; he brought them into Canaan; we must be true to Jehovah—to teach the children of Israel these facts was the purpose of the writers of the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua.

In the early stories of Genesis we are told how God created the world and how he guided mankind: how suffering followed sin, but God turned the sin to his purpose: these are the stories of the creation, of the temptation and fall in Eden, of the murder of Abel by Cain, of the universal corruption of men, the flood, and the preservation of Noah and his family, of the building of the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues.

With the journey of Abraham from Ur of Chaldea up the Euphrates Valley and then across the Jordan River and into the land of Canaan, the land promised to him and his descendants, the history of the Chosen People begins. This was about 2000 B.C., or about as many years before Christ as our time is after Christ. The Patriarchal History narrates God's dealings with the founders of the Hebrew nation—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Abraham lived in such constant communion with God that he gained the beautiful name of "the Friend of God"—the name by which he is called to this day by both Jews and Moslems. Isaac the Peaceloving; Jacob, at first the Crafty, but after the wrestling with God at the brook Jabbok, the Prince with God; Joseph the Noble-hearted—what visions of God's guiding hand do these names recall! Jacob had twelve sons, the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. You recall how his brothers envied Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt, how he was taken into Potiphar's house and thence to prison, and after his interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was made second unto the Pharaoh in the realm. A great famine drove the brothers to Egypt to buy grain, and eventually Jacob, the aged father, and all the brothers settled in Egypt.

Years passed and there sat on the throne of Egypt a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, who made the Israelites slaves and oppressed them grievously. Then Moses became their leader, and changed the slaves into freemen. He

led them out of Egypt. You recall the crossing of the Red Sea, the forty years of life in the wilderness, and the giving of a new religion at Mount Sinai.

Of the original number who left Egypt only two entered Canaan, Joshua and Caleb. Joshua led the people across the Jordan, captured Jericho, and divided the land of Canaan among the children of Israel.

When he had reached the good old age of one hundred and ten years, Joshua realized that his death was near. The last two chapters of the book of Joshua record Joshua's parting exhortation to his people. He reminded them of what God had done for them—"The Lord your God he it is that fighteth for you"—of the rewards they would receive for loyalty and of the punishments for disobedience. Then he briefly reviewed their life as a people from the time of Abraham to the present, reminding them that now they were in possession of cities which they had not built and of vineyards and olive trees which they had not planted. In return for all God's benefits they owed God faithful, sincere, undivided service.

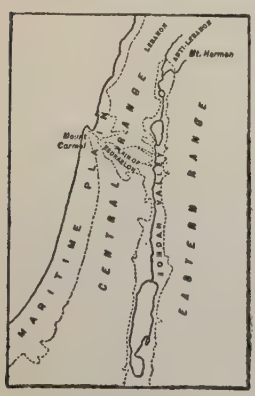
The death of Joshua and the apostasy of the people in the succeeding period of the judges are the themes of our lesson.

The Book of Judges. Turn to pp. 25-28 of this *Guide*.

Lesson Outline. After verses 7-10 our lesson text gives the whole history of the period of the Judges in a nutshell—the framework on which each stage in the history is built. These are the regularly recurring formulas of the Book: I. And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah (Apostasy). II. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them unto the hands of their enemies (Punishment). III. And Jehovah raised them up judges, and saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them (Penitence and Forgiveness). IV. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers (Apostasy again).

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The conquest of Canaan had been made under Joshua, and the land had been allotted to the several tribes. Ephraim's allotment was in the hill-country, that part of the central tableland which extends from north of Jerusalem to the transverse plain of Esdraelon. Turn to the colored map, in the front of this *Guide*. What mountain is meant by Gaash is unknown. The location of Timnath-heres is doubtful; two sites are suggested, one ten miles from Bethel (modern Tibneh) where there are some remarkable rock-hewn tombs; the other nine miles south of Shechem. Strange to say, upon Giant's Hill, which overlooks the Bosphorus and the Black Sea, there is a large tomb which the Mohammedans call that of Joshua.



Four Parallel Regions of Palestine

Teach the four regions which extend across Palestine from north to south, parallel in the main with its coast line. First: the low Maritime Plain; second, the Central Range which north of Carmel is cut across by the low Plain of Esdraelon; third, the deep Jordan Valley, six feet above sea level at Lake Huleh, 693 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee, and 1292 feet (about a quarter of a mile) below the sea level at the Dead Sea; fourth, the Eastern Tableland beyond the Jordan. Assign ¶s 17, 18, and 19 of "In the Master's Country": see p. 4. Let your pupils color "the hill-country of Ephraim" on their outline map, p. 33 of that book. See also the first ¶ under The Geographical Background of the next lesson, p. 67 of this *Guide*.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. The word that emerges from this lesson for all teachers, as they face the opportunities of a new year

with their class, is that of the Psalmist, "Renew a right spirit within me". "You will succeed", said Dr. Parker to one undertaking an important task with no special equipment, "because you have the right spirit". The Editor of the Sunday School Chronicle quotes Dr. Parker and asks: "Can this be said of us? Is our heart in tune with God? Do we thrill with hope and love and longing as we face our class? Are we filled with the tenderness, the glow of inward rapture, which marked the days of our first love to Christ? If they be gone, let us find our way back to his cross. It is there that the light of a new morning will break upon us. It is no merely pious exhortation that comes to us, but a profound law of God's operation."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Little children live in the concrete; their minds can not deal with abstractions. This is one of three lessons in the year's course in which there is no definite person nor act about which your teaching can center. The reference to Joshua you will wisely omit, for your pupils know nothing about him or his times. God's patience, God's readiness to forgive, will be the thought that you will impress today. Begin with an explanation of the Golden Text (See p. 57 of this *Guide*), and tell your pupils something about the people of Israel for whom God had done so much, and who should have loved and obeyed him. Yet they forgot God and did wrong; but God forgave them when they cried to him. Follow this with a talk about God's readiness to forgive them for doing wrong and to help them to do right. Tell about Johnny, p. 60 of this *Guide,* expanding the story. "The quicker you turn right back, the better": emphasize this thought.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A boy was sent by his teacher to the principal of the school one day for doing something wrong. After hearing the facts, the principal took out a blank book and wrote down the boy's name, observing as he did so: "You have not been sent to me before. Now, I don't know you, you may be a good boy for all I know. Good boys sometimes make mistakes. Now I'll just make a note in pencil that you were sent to me today, and I will also note why you were sent. But you see I am making this memorandum in pencil, and I am not bearing on very hard. And if you are not sent to me again this year, I shall just erase this from my book and no one will ever know anything about it". That man was giving that boy another chance. During this year, we shall see how often the Israelites needed another chance. What is our Golden Text today from the prophet Hosea? I will heal their backsliding, I will erase the penciled memorandum against them, I will give them another chance.

Who was it that led the children of Israel into the Promised Land?

For Older Pupils. One of the best things which our Government does is to reclaim lands. The Reclamation Law passed by Congress in 1902 provides for the use of National funds to reclaim arid lands by irrigation projects. Gigantic works have been carried through in the West, by which arid wastes have been transformed into fertile farming and grazing lands. The six largest projects report at the present writing the reclamation of four hundred and twenty-six thousand acres in Nebraska, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, and Washington. We are all interested in these great projects, whether or not we live in their section of our country. It is great to see worthless soil reclaimed. But there is a reclamation that is infinitely more worth while—the reclamation of men and of nations. How much is a man of more value than a sheep! once exclaimed the Son of Man. Our year's lessons in the Old Testament portray the Great Reclaimer yearning over backsliding Israel and reclaiming many a barren life; but we shall see many a man so hardened in sin that the waters of life flowing so freely make no impression upon his soul, and see Israel at last taken into captivity, an example of one that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, who shall suddenly be destroyed.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Backsliding

A Long Backsliding. Nothing which has life remains exactly the same. Boys and girls grow in stature, and after they have attained their full growth their bodies are constantly changing. Boys and girls grow in knowledge, and after they become adults they must either keep on adding to their knowledge or they will soon have less knowledge. Boys and girls and men and women grow spiritually; they do not stand still in this realm any more than in the physical or in the mental realm; if they are not growing in their knowledge of God and of his purpose for them and in their obedience to him, they are losing ground spiritually, and are backsliding as the prophet Hosea expresses it.

There is a little animal that swims about the sea and resembles a tadpole. It has something which resembles a backbone, a tail, a head, a very small brain, and a kind of eye. The tadpole, you know, keeps on growing and becomes a frog, but this sea creature dwindles and dwindles, losing its tail and backbone and eye and brain and head, till it is just a thick kind of sack. It may be thrown upon the seashore, and if touched, it has the power to throw out water, that is all; therefore it is called a sea-squirt. Growth means increase, or we would say that the sea-squirt grows down instead of growing up; it changes for the worse. The prophet Hosea says that there is hope for the boys and girls and men and women who have changed for the worse. "The way of the transgressor is hard at best, but the traveling becomes easier with the first turn to the right."

If you are on the Wrong Road, the quicker you Turn Round the Better. Our lesson is about the Israelites who turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked. The way spoken of as "the way in which their fathers walked" was the right road; when they forsook God and worshipped idols they turned out of the right road into the wrong one. This story by Frances Harmer (necessarily condensed here) will help little folks understand what the Israelites did, and what they should have done when they found that they were going wrong.

Johnny always knew which was the right road! It was the one he didn't like, the one that led to school. The lane that led from his own back door, led where two roads ran away from each other, just like a big fork with two prongs. One, the narrow one, led down to the schoolhouse, and how well he knew it!

One morning Johnny was a little late for school. When he came to the two roads he stopped. The wrong road looked so very nice. He put out one little foot, the wrong way! Then he put out the other little foot, also the wrong way! Only two steps, and there he was on the wrong road!

Johnny drew a deep breath. It was terrifying, but it was delightful, too. He went on, and on. Now he would stop to gather a flower. Again, he would be tempted to chase a bright butterfly. And flower and butterfly alike led him farther and farther away, from the right road, the road to school, and from doing what his mother certainly thought he was doing.

Presently his foot stuck in a deep, deep hole, made by a cow's hoof. He had hard work in pulling it up. The next moment, the other foot was hard and fast in another hole! And then he saw that all the road was mud—black mud, and nothing else. Before he had floundered along much farther, he had both feet fast in the black, soft mud.

But Johnny was a brave little boy. He stood still for a minute, shutting his eyes very fast and then opening them, and wondered what he could do. And then he knew and did it!

He turned *right round,* and began to go back the way he had come. It was hard work. His feet stuck fast in the mud, and he had, at the last, to leave one shoe behind him! On, and on, Johnny struggled. At last he came to where the two roads forked, and once more the choice was his to make.

He would go on to school. But was anything harder than going into school! Every one looks at you, when you're late, even if you have both shoes.

However, teacher was better than he felt he deserved. It was a great comfort to tell her all about it. He wished he had told her how he wanted to see the wrong road, for then she would have told him that it led to the pigsty.

And Johnny learned two things that morning. First, that it is better to keep to the right road, for the wrong one may take you to a pigsty. Secondly, that if you find yourself on the wrong road, *the quicker you turn right back the better.*

When a Break Must Be Made in the Straight Line of Life. The line of life should be straight, not crooked; the early life should be given the direction it ought to keep till the end. Bishop McDowell's words in "A Man's Religion" ring true:—

Some of you cannot now avoid a break, you must face about; you have been going the wrong way. But you can go right the rest of the way. You can make the remainder of your life what it should be. There are two tragedies, one vastly greater than the other—the tragedy of a life that has to be turned around, and the tragedy of a life that is allowed to go wrong clear to the end. And the latter is unspeakable. The gospel is for men who wish to turn about. It gives men a chance to have an old age unlike their wicked and foolish youth. Turn about, if you need to, and do it now, and help your sons, and the boys you know and love, to give their lives at the very beginning the direction they ought to keep until the end. This prevents the break at the middle and the bitterness at the end.

II. New Year Resolutions

A Look Backward from the Turn in the Road. The beginning of the New Year is a natural, sharp turn in the road of time. Here we may wisely rest a while and in the peace and quiet and calm of self communion see the long stretch of the road of a single twelvemonth.

We now see how many times the paralyzing hand of procrastination touched the good deeds we meant to do, the roseate dreams we longed to transform into actualities. We *wished* to do and we *wanted* to do but we did not *will* to do. The fault was not in conditions but in—us. We were not equal to opportunities. It is a false philosophy that teaches that opportunity calls only once at every man's house. It comes with the persistency of an importunate creditor, always in a new guise, and clamors for admission, but we may be—too busy to answer the bell.

Habits that we had determined to master, to bring into sweet harmony with our highest self, may still stalk large and insolent before us. They may seem to taunt us that they are stronger than we. They were never made in a day and cannot be mastered in a day. An hour may begin the making of a habit; an hour may begin its breaking. Time, with heart and mind united in determination, can conquer any evil habit or create and confirm any good one.

Knowing the right is useless unless—we practice it. Realizing our weakness is profitless unless—we seek to change. We may even grow so comfortably reconciled to faults and failings as to accept them as finalities, to confess them and even boast about them. It is unjust to ourselves and unjust to others. Some people treat their faults as though they were flaws in the Portland vase of a noble nature and as if pointing them out were practically banishing them forever.

Nature is constantly giving us new turns of the road. It may be a birthday or some general anniversary in the cycle of the year. It may be some red letter day in the private calendar of our emotions or some date eloquent to us as telling of some joyous "first" or some pathetic "last" time in the sacred diary of the heart. These and numberless other days, hours, or single moments may bring us alone to—the turn in the road.

Then may come one of those rare moments of life, of fine spiritual discernment, of luminous revelation, of coming to one's highest self. In such a spirit the very tingle of the inspiration of the infinite fills us. We seem born again to new, better, and greater things, for we have seen the divine vision—at the turn of the road. *Condensed* from *The Crown of Individuality*, by *William George Jordan.*

Why Some Good Resolutions Fail. Many of us, I am sure, continue to make no progress in our religious life simply because we do not deal definitely enough with ourselves. We promise to God and to ourselves in

a general kind of way that we shall love him and obey him; and it may be that we are quite sincere. But even while we are promising this general kind of goodness, we have already made up our minds that it will only be a general kind of goodness, that we shall in all likelihood remain very much the same as we are at the moment, that we shall neglect good things as usual, and fall into transgressions from which indeed we trust God will deliver us. And so we never gain any ringing victory over ourselves, and religion is apt to lose itself among the general interests of our life. A merely general promise of obedience to Christ is almost sure to be understood by ourselves as meaning a slack obedience, the mere avoidance of the greater, that is, the more public sins.

It is not enough that we come under a general and undefined engagement to live the Christian life. We must bind ourselves down to some specific acts of obedience.

There is something which we have fallen out of the habit of doing, something which we confess to ourselves, and feel when we are alone with God, is incumbent upon us—that, then, is a thing which we must pledge ourselves before Christ to do. For we have no more right to take credit for things which we merely purpose doing than we have to take credit for the dreams which sway our souls while we are asleep. There are things in the life of each of us about which we feel that, as followers of Christ, we ought to act in a certain way, and that if we fail to act in that way, we are there and then not Christian people at all.

Well, we must with firmness make these things plain to ourselves, and here and now pledge ourselves that we shall attend to them, that we shall not give ourselves rest until we have dealt with them so thoroughly that our souls are quite at peace and we can lift up our faces to God without spot. *Condensed* from *At Close Quarters* by *John A. Hutton.*

III. A Nation in the Making

God is Still God of the Nations. We can readily believe that God maintains a sovereign control over the historical development of nations in modern as well as in ancient times. He is as truly the God of Nations now as he was then. Indeed, because of the rapidity of national growth and the complexity of national life in our modern era, the exercise of his mighty power may be more intensely active in the present time than in the past ages. The Hebrew historians described with realistic diction the sovereign workings of God among the nations, and in forms of speech which made clear their vivid recognition of the direct agency of an overruling Providence. The modern historian, however devout his mood, may not, perhaps, use Biblical formulae, being influenced by the dominant idea of theistic evolution now so regnant in the philosophy and science of our times; but this does not necessarily indicate any deliberate intention on his part to ignore or to banish the idea of God's sovereignty, and his supreme guidance of the contemporary life of nations. He simply brings his trend of thought, together with his literary style and terminology, into conformity with prevalent philosophical theories of the mode and order of divine activities as related to historical progress. A new view of the divine methods of working requires new forms of expression, which, while giving prominence to secondary causes and evolutionary processes, do not rule out the First Cause, or make the existence of a supreme Intelligence any less essential in a true philosophy of history. *Dr. James S. Dennis*, in *The Modern Call of Missions.*

Oriental Christendom in the Making. To many who have some knowledge of oriental nations it may seem to be a difficult, if not a hopeless, undertaking to lead them to appreciate and strive after the finer ideals of Christian civilization. It is just in this connection that the lessons of history are pertinent and incontrovertible. Teutonic culture and Anglo-Saxon civilization—let us not forget it—have developed from the fierce temper and barbaric social code of the races of Northern Europe. Thus, along the road of slow and painful advance nations now exemplifying the highest civilization of the age have already walked and others will in due time follow in their footsteps. The Japan, the Korea, the China, and the India, of today, as compared with the

status of those same nations a generation or two ago, are examples of an oriental Christendom in the making. Faith based not only on the promises of God, but upon visible historical precedent, may rest assured of this, but there must be patience while the "increasing purpose" of the centuries is being realized. *Dr. James S. Dennis,* in *The Modern Call of Missions.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Da nobis Domine hodie perfecte incipere. These are the Latin words which an Archbishop of Canterbury wrote one morning in his diary. They mean, Grant us, Lord, today perfectly to begin. Let us take them as our wish and prayer on this first Sunday in the New Year, and let us repeat them on every new day, for every new day is a fresh beginning. Ponder the difference between such a prayer and the following words, "Today I will perfectly begin." We begin a year or a day aright only when we ask God's forgiveness for our failures in the past, and his help for the present.

Our Prayer: O God of the years that are past, and the years that are coming—through whose hand run the fleeting sands of the present, pardon us for the errors and sins of the days that are dead; help us in all our thinking and doing in the days that are to be. Let us not remember too much the sorrows that have been. Lift up our hearts and our hopes to the dreams and ideals that are before us, that we may rise above the weaknesses, meannesses, and sinfulness which do so often dog us to our fall (*Dr. W. L. Watkinson*).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The earlier history of the Israelites and the situation at the beginning of the period of the Judges. See pp. 26, 57 of this *Guide.*
2. The Book of Judges. See pp. 25-28 of this *Guide.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What conflicts with enemies preceded this with the Canaanites? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 67.) 2. Describe the Plain of Esdraelon with its exits and entrances. (*In the Master's Country,* ¶s 35 and 36, or *Guide,* pp. 67, 68.) 3. Which tribes bordered the Plain on the north? Which on the south? Which tribes were the farthest away? 4. Describe the Kishon River at different seasons. (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 68.) 5. What woman who had been a servant in Jacob's family for many years was buried not far from the palm-tree of Deborah? (Gen. 35.8.) 6. How long had the king of Canaan oppressed the Israelites? 7. What other tribes came to the help of Barak, besides the two mentioned in our lesson? (Judges 5.) Why are these two the ones mentioned in this prose account? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 67.) 8. Compare Barak's words in verse 8 with Moses' words in Ex. 33.15. 9. What were the words of the priest when the Israelites went into battle, as given in Dt. 20.1-4? 10. If the battle against Sisera occurred in the twelfth century B.C., how long was this before the sons of Greece fought at Troy? 11. What is the first great triumphal ode in the Bible and what does it commemorate? (Ex. 15.) 12. What was woman's position in Biblical times? (*Guide,* p. 66.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What did Deborah mean by her words in verse 9? (*Guide,* p. 65.) 2. Verse 11 interrupts the story: why is it inserted? (*Guide,* p. 65). 3. Where could the Canaanites use their chariots? 4. What do the poetical words of Judges 5.20 mean? 5. How is Deborah's Song rated as poetry? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 27.) 6. What adjectives would apply to Deborah? 7. What women did Jesus commend for their great faith? 8. Do you commend or condemn the deed of Jael?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Deborah's Song. Begin a Note-Book upon The Period of the Judges. Today write "Israel's Apostasy and God's Patience." (The note-book work should always be written after the lesson has been taught. See ¶ 3, p. 19, ¶ 1, p. 21, and ¶ 10, p. 22 of this *Guide.*)

LESSON II—JANUARY 10

DEBORAH AND BARAK DELIVER ISRAEL

Golden Text

The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard,
And delivered them out of all their troubles. Psalm 34.17

LESSON Judges 4.4-23; 5.1-22: verses 4.4-16 printed

MEMORIZE verses 4.14, 15

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. 5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, *saying*, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude: and I will deliver him into thy hands. 8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh; and there went up ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, even from the children of Hobab the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh.

12 And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. 13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon. 14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand: is not Jehovah gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. 15 And Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet. 16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

4. *Deborah.* The word means "bee"; Matthew Henry says she answered her name by her industry, sagacity, and great usefulness to the public, her sweetness to her friends and sharpness to her enemies.—*The wife of Lappidoth.* "The termination not being commonly found in the name of a man, some make this the name of a place: she was *a woman of Lappidoth.* Others take it appellatively. Lapidoth signifies *lamps.* The Rabbis say she had employed herself in making wicks for the lamps of the tabernacle; and, having stooped to that mean office for God, she was afterwards thus preferred. Or she was a woman of illumination, one that was extraordinarily knowing and wise" (*Henry*).

5. *Dwelt.* Or, *sat*, RVm. (*RVm* stands for *Revised Version margin*, the notes at the bottom of our Revised Version. In these notes are given explanations of the meaning of Hebrew words or alternate translations of the Hebrew, and they are often very illuminating. Pupils of Intermediate or Senior Grade should read these notes in connection with every lesson.) The meaning is probably that she sat under the tree as judge, perhaps not so often to settle

Courtesy of Harper Brothers

DEBORAH

From a Drawing by George T. Tobin

disputes between men as to declare what was the judgment of God in national affairs.—*The palm-tree of Deborah.* The palm-tree was called after her. It was in this valley that another Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, had been buried centuries before. "On the coins of the Roman Empire, Judæa is represented as a woman seated under a palm-tree, captive and weeping. It is the contrast of that figure which will best place before us the character and calling of Deborah. It is the same Judæn palm, under whose shadow she sits, but not with downcast eyes, and folded hands, and extinguished hopes; with all the fire of faith and energy, eager for the battle, confident of the victory" (*Stanley*).

Coin Representing the Capture of Jerusalem

6. *Barak.* The word means "Lightning".—*Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded?* Compare Joan of Arc's similar faith in the Unseen.—*Ten thousand.* Compare Judges 5.8: here are mentioned only the men of the two tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, who were the most interested in defeating the oppressors because their territory bordered the Plain of Esdraelon.

7. *I will deliver him into thy hand.* By *I* Deborah means God, in whose name she is speaking, verse 6. When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies . . . the priest shall . . . say unto the people, Hear, O Israel, you draw nigh this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint; fear not, nor tremble, neither be ye affrighted at them; for Jehovah your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. Dt. 20.1-4.

8. Barak was not brave enough to stand alone. How much wiser his words would have been had he spoken them to Jehovah as did Moses in his memorable words: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence", Ex. 33.15.

9. *Into the hands of a woman.* Sisera was killed by Jael, a woman, verses 17-22, but Deborah's words seem rather to apply to herself; she, rather than Barak, would be given the honor of the day's victory.

10. *Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali.* See ¶ 2, p. 67, of this *Guide.*—They *went up.* To Mount Tabor. The flat summit of this rounded hill or its sloping side was an excellent camping ground, whence they could observe the movement of the enemy and charge down upon them in the plain below.—*At his feet.* Following him.

11-13. These verses explain how it happened that the family of Heber was in the northern section instead of with the tribes of Judah and Simeon, on the highlands of central and southern Judea, where they belonged; it was of this family that Jael was a member, verse 21.—*Heber,* Hebrew, Kain: see Num. 24.22, RVm.—*The Kenites.* Children of the Kenite, Moses' brother-in-law, Judges 1.16—*Brother-in-law.* Or, *father-in-law,* RVm—*Oak.* Or, *terebinth,* RVm—*Gentiles.* Or, *nations,* RVm.

14. "Josephus says that when Barak saw Sisera's army drawn up, and attempting to surround the mountain on the top of which he and his forces lay encamped, his heart quite failed him, and he determined to retire to a place of greater safety; but Deborah animated him to make a descent upon Sisera, assuring him that this was the day marked out in the divine counsels for his defeat. 'Now they appear most threatening when they are ripe for ruin. The thing is as sure to be done as if it were done already: the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand'" (*Henry*).—*Is not Jehovah gone out before thee?* If God be for us who can be against us? (*Paul*).

15. *And Jehovah discomfited Sisera.* The stars fought against him, 5.20. See p. 68 of this *Guide.* Compare Miriam's refrain at the Red Sea: Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thown into the sea.—*Fled away.* He went on foot to Kedesh, while Barak pursued the charioteers in their flight westward. What befell Sisera is told in verses 17-22. Deborah gloats over his death in savage glee—

> At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
> At her feet he bowed, he fell:
> Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

But her revenge was swallowed up in the desire to give to God the victory:—

So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah:
But let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

Chapter V. This is the poetic account, as Chapter IX is the prose account, of the defeat of the Canaanites under Deborah and Barak. It is the oldest war-ode preserved in the Bible. See p. 27 of this *Guide*.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *Now Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel at that time.* Before this Miriam had aspired to rule; now Deborah is actually the ruler. Many changes occurred in the position of woman during the centuries covered by the Bible. Dr. Ismar J. Peritz thus summarizes them:

"There are traces of the existence in ancient Israel of the matriarchate, when the woman is the head of the family, and descent is reckoned by her. There are traces of the custom of marriage by capture; of marriage by purchase, with all the attendant consequences of woman's subject condition. Among the priestly class and in ritual legislation woman's position is inferior. She not only cannot be a priestess, but she is considered ceremonially defiling. This culminates eventually in Judaism in the entire exclusion of woman from worship; and the Talmudic Jew thanks his Creator in his every morning's prayer that he has not made him a woman. But among the prophets woman is more the equal of man, appearing as leader side by side with him in home, church, and state; and in the teachings of Jesus she comes fully to her own."

17-22. The "rug" which Jael used may have been the tent curtain: the "bottle" was of lamb or goat skin: the tent-pin was of wood, and it was the women who drove the tent-pins into the ground when tents were erected.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. After the death of Joshua what did the children of Israel fail to remember? What did they do? How were they punished? When they cried to Jehovah whom did he raise up to deliver them? After the deliverance were they loyal to Jehovah?

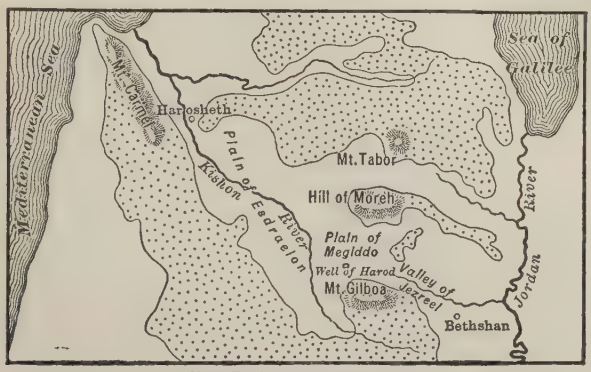
Lesser Conflicts and Lesser Judges that preceded the Conflict with the Canaanites under Deborah. Othniel, the younger brother of Caleb, a man of the tribe of Judah, overcame Chushan-Risbathaim, King of Mesopotamia, who was the only invader from the far East until the decline of the Monarchy. The Moabites, from across the Jordan, established themselves at Jericho and Gilgal, and exacted a yearly tribute from the Benjaminites, the neighboring tribe on the south. Ehud delivered the tribute and secured an audience with the king, who was resting in the chamber on the roof of his house where it was cooler, for in this Jordan Valley so far below the sea it has always been exceedingly hot. The king sent away his attendants, when Ehud declared that he had a secret oracle to announce; as the king arose to hear it, Ehud drew the dagger which had been concealed by his long mantle and slew the king. Ehud made his escape, locking the door behind him, and the attendants delayed long before entering. When they found their king slain the warriors were panic-stricken and fled to the Jordan, where Israelite warriors awaited them and slew them.

The next Judge was Shamgar, although he is not directly called a judge. The Philistines were now the oppressors and for fear of them the highways were unoccupied and travellers walked through the byways. With only his ox-goad as a weapon Shamgar, probably at the head of other peasants similarly armed, killed six hundred of the Philistines.

The Conflict with the Canaanites. A great crisis now came. Jabin, king of the Northern Confederacy of the Canaanites, through Sisera, his commander-in-chief, had held for twenty years a military despotism over the northern districts of Canaan. His power might have grown till he had regained the whole land and sealed Israel's doom. Deborah, the judge, recognized the gravity of the situation. How she trusted in God's help, how she summoned Barak to fight the enemy, how he mustered his troops and how the battle went, how Sisera perished, and how Deborah exulted in song, our lesson tells.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

This lesson can not be understood without a knowledge of its geography, and a thorough knowledge gained today about the Plain of Esdraelon, its river, its mountains, and its exits and entrances, will be most useful throughout the year's course. Let your pupils sketch the Plain and locate the places mentioned in the lesson. Or the outline of the map on this page may be hectographed, and each pupil be asked to draw the river and locate the mountain. If your pupils have copies of "In the Master's Country" (George



The Plain of Esdraelon

H. Doran Company, 25 cents) let them learn ¶s 35 and 36, p. 7, and complete the outline map No. 5 on p. 35.

Through Palestine west of the Jordan there extends from north to south its backbone, the central tableland. This tableland is cut across north of Carmel by the triangular Plain of Esdraelon, which separated the southern from the northern tribes. The mountains of Judea were occupied by the tribe of Manasseh, whose land extended from the Sea to the Jordan; the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Dan, the three together extending from the sea to the Jordan; and the tribes of Judah and of Simeon, each extending from the sea to the Jordan. The Plain of Esdraelon had been allotted to the tribe of Issachar, but it was dominated at this time by the Canaanites. North of this Plain were the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, and along the seacoast north of Zebulun was the tribe of Asher. See our large colored map.

Although the only tribes mentioned in the prose account as taking part in the combat against the Canaanites are the two bordering the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, yet the poetic account mentions all the others (save Judah and Simeon in the far south) as either uniting with the two tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali or as refusing to come to their help in a united action of all the tribes. Notice that the temperature of the zeal of the different portions of the nation can be traced, as Dean Stanley says, almost in proportion to their nearness to the center of the agitation. The main support was naturally derived from the northern tribes who were the chief sufferers from the oppressor. But the leaders in this contest came from the two ends of Israel, Deborah from Mount Ephraim on the south and Barak from Kedesh on the north.

Deborah's home was between Ramah and Bethel, towns which were not far north of Jebus, ancient Jerusalem. Barak's home was at Kedesh-Naphtali; that is, Kedesh in the territory of the tribe of Naphtali. The word *Kedesh* means a *shrine*. Stones and thistles and ruins of the Roman occupation now mark its site, four miles northwest of the Waters of Merom. Because Deborah came to Kedesh to direct the muster and fight, tradition locates her grave here as well as that of Barak.

The apex of the Plain of Esdraelon is near the sea north of Mount Carmel. Its northern edge is a low ridge which separates it from the coast plain and then the Galilean Hills, which form a steep wall a thousand feet high. On the northeast is Mount Tabor, 1843 feet high. Its southern edge is Mount Carmel

and the lower hills of Samaria which curve around and end with Mount Gilboa on the southeast. Between Mount Gilboa and Mount Tabor, partly blocking the way to the Jordan, are low hills, the largest being the Hill of Moreh (now called Little Hermon).

Esdraelon is "a vast theater with its clearly-defined stage, with its proper exits and entrances." The latter are five in number: the pass of the Kishon at its apex, the glen by Mount Tabor on the northeast, the Valley of Jezreel on the southeast, and the Plain of Dothan and the approach to Megiddo on the south.

Harosheth of the Gentiles, from which Sisera advanced, is on the pass leading from the plain by the Sea into the Plain of Esdraelon. His chariots could be driven up and down the coast plain and across the Plain of Esdraelon. So there is no absurdity in his having chariots in a land that is largely stony and hilly, as some writers have claimed. Harosheth was Sisera's entrance, but he was unable to make it his exit.

The Kishon River flows northwesterly through the Plain into the Sea. It is usually dry in summer and I have crossed it almost without realizing its existence, but in the rainy season it is a rapid torrent, seldom restrained by its mud banks.

From the slopes of Mount Tabor Deborah and Barak could see the nine hundred chariots advancing toward them across the Plain. How could they, on foot, armed only with rude weapons, contend against warriors in their chariots, to whose axle-trees scythes were fastened with which to mow them down? But they did not fight alone. "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera". Torrents of rain poured down from heaven, the plain became a mass of mud, the Kishon became a flood. Is not Jehovah gone out before thee? Deborah had cried to the halting Barak: she recognized the help of God in the brewing storm, and well did she sing afterwards, "The Lord came down for me against the mighty."

> Then did the horsehoofs stamp
> By reason of the prancings, the prancings of their strong ones;
> The river Kishon swept them away,
> That ancient river, the river Kishon.

The river Kishon swept away the Canaanite dead, as later it carried off the priests of Baal killed by the order of the prophet Elijah, and the bodies of the Mamelukes who fell by the swords of Bonaparte's soldiers. This is "the classic battle-ground of the Scriptures"; and more battles have been fought here than on any other battle-field of the world, for it was the great trail of the nations for four thousand years.

Dr. George Adam Smith well says that the victory won that day by the Plain over the Canaanite was not so great as the victory won by Israel over the Plain. Esdraelon is broad and open enough to have been a frontier between two nations; but the unselfish tribes had overcome this difficulty between them. What in a century or two might have yawned to an impassable gulf, they had bridged once for all by their loyalty to the Ideal of a united people and a united fatherland. And the power of that Ideal was faith in a common God.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Deborah had enthusiasm and zeal, but she could not have freed Israel without Barak. Barak was the man of action, but without Deborah to arouse him, he would have done nothing whatever for Israel. Your aim is to make your pupils good, and also to make them good for something. Your enthusiasm and zeal for the right are invaluable, they kindle a like enthusiasm in your pupils, and your knowledge of what your pupils can do and should do is also invaluable, in directing their enthusiasm and zeal to definite good ends.

If teachers of young pupils can imbue them with the thought of God in connection with all the experiences of life, their whole after lives will be moulded thereby. A deep sense of God, a high faith in his love and care, gives a wonderful courage to meet the troubles of life.

Teachers of boys will please read ¶ 3, p. 19 of this *Guide*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Show your pupils Tissot's picture No. 65, Deborah beneath the Palm Tree, and tell very simply the lesson story, how the Israelites suffered from their enemies, the Canaanites, how Deborah asked God to help them and believed he would help them, how she made Barak so brave that he said he would gather an army and fight. Picture the men coming to Mount Tabor, Deborah and Barak looking eagerly westward across the plain below, and tell what the two said when they saw the Canaanites coming toward them in their chariots. Draw the picture of a chariot on your blackboard. Briefly tell about the attack, the sinking of the chariot wheels in the mud, the flight of the enemy, the victory of Barak.

Call for the Golden Text and talk about it. Teach your pupils that when they are in trouble it is good to tell God about it in prayer. No matter how small the trouble is, God wants them to tell him about it, and he always listens. Prayer always helps.

Prayer gives courage, as it gave courage to Deborah and Barak. But like those two, we must do what we can to help answer our prayers. God did not deliver the Israelites out of their trouble without anything being done by the Israelites themselves. A little girl has fallen down. Suppose she lies there and cries, will that help her up? Suppose she asks God to help her get up, but does not try to get up; will that help? A little girl once tried this. Her mother found her lying in the path, and asked her why she was there. "I prayed God to get me up", she answered, "but he isn't doing it very quick". Her mother told her that she must help her own lazy little self. When you are in trouble, ask God to help you, but also try to help yourself.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Call for the maps which your pupils have drawn and question them upon the geography of the Lesson. See pp. 67, 68 of this *Guide*.

For Older Pupils. "God Almighty has been too much for me!" exclaimed Napoleon when on that memorable retreat from Moscow he was beaten and the greater part of his army destroyed, not by Russia's soldiers, but by the blinding snowstorm and the bitter cold. He had not calculated upon winter's coming so much earlier than usual, and he saw in that circumstance the hand of God against him. Our lesson tells how God Almighty discomfited Sisera. Who was Sisera?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard, And delivered them out of all their troubles.

The Stars in their Courses Do Fight against Sisera. We have a similar instance in the story of our own little island. When the Spanish Armada set sail for England, its object was the destruction of England's liberties and the uprooting of England's religion. It was the mightiest fleet the world had ever seen when it sailed proudly out of the harbors of Spain. There were a hundred and thirty mighty vessels in it, while to oppose it England could collect together only eighty vessels—scarcely thirty of which were ships of the line. The disparity was ridiculous, absurd. Indeed, so conscious were the Spaniards of their superior strength that they called their fleet in advance, "the Invincible Armada". When it appeared off the Lizard it stretched in the shape of a half-moon for seven miles across the sea. Every one knows that it was not Howard and Drake who finally destroyed the Armada. When Howard and Drake fell back for lack of ammunition, Nature seemed to take up their work. As the fleeing ships tried to make their way round by the North of Scotland, wind and sea took up the work of destruction. On many a rocky island in Scotland, on many a cape on the West of Ireland those great galleons of Spain went crashing to their doom. Out of the one hundred and thirty ships that set sail, only fifty-four battered vessels made their way back, and it was not Drake's daring or Howard's fire-ships that had wrought the destruction. Wind and wave had done it. English folk verily

believed that Nature had helped them in the fight. "Deus flavit", so ran the inscription on the medal which Elizabeth struck to commemorate the mighty deliverance, "et dissipati sunt"—"God blew upon them and they were scattered."

Of course, the modern man will say that these interventions of Nature's forces on the side of what we believe to have been justice and right were mere coincidences and nothing more. And yet I am not sure that our fathers, who with a simpler faith saw the hand of God in all these things, were not nearer the truth. "He maketh the winds his messengers", says one of the psalmists, "his ministers a flame of fire." "Fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind," says another, "fulfill his word." And I find no difficulty myself in believing that God Almighty—who is in all and through all and over all, and without whom nothing happens—used these natural agencies (which are his ministers) to overthrow the oppressor and to defend the right.

I am content for the moment, however, to waive the literal interpretation and application of Deborah's words, The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. And yet I want to claim for it that it sets forth in poetic form a sure and abiding truth. How shall I state the law, the principle, which I think it embodies? Let me state it in this way—the very constitution of the universe, the laws of Nature are against the wrong-doer; the very constitution of the universe, the laws of Nature are on the side of the man who does right. Sisera was to these early Israelites the personification of oppression and tyranny. Jabin the king scarcely counted; Sisera—this man with the nine hundred chariots—was the real oppressor. Nature was against this evil man. The laws of the universe did battle against him. And what Deborah here says of Sisera is true of every evil man, of every evil interest, of every evil power, of all wickedness and wrong—the stars in their courses are fighting against them; the trend and constitution of things are working steadily and irresistibly for their defeat and overthrow. The universe is so made that it is against all wrong, and on the side of right. *Condensed* from a Chapter in *The Hope of The Gospel,* by *J. D. Jones.*

Those nations only are Blessed whose God is Jehovah. Lincoln's inaugural represented months of reflection, every word of which had been weighed, and Abraham Lincoln made his argument to march towards this sentence, "Christianity and a firm reliance on him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust all our present difficulties." When the great crisis came and the fate of the republic was held in the balance, it was Lincoln's state papers and his letters to the people, that became the anchor holding the ship of state in the time of storm. All his proclamations, letters and addresses call upon the people to return to God in submission, repentance and prayer. "It is meet for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible affliction." Another: "It has pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe signal victories; let us acknowledge and render thanks to our heavenly Father for these inestimable blessings." Again: "Let us recognize the sublime truth that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord." *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis* in *All the Year Round.*

One Whom God Heard and Delivered out of Trouble. Handless, footless, sightless Guoi Aing is known in the Kienning Leper Settlement, China, as "The Saint". A letter dictated by him to a lady in England who had sent him a gift was printed in "Without the Camp", a magazine published by the Leper Mission. This is the way the letter closes:

"You will want to know what my body is like—there is no wellness in it—no feet, no hands, no sight, no feeling—outside body greatly distressed, but inside heart in greatest peace, for the inside heart has hopes. What hopes? Hopes of everlasting blessedness because of God's love and because of the Saviour's grace. These words are from Guoi Aing's mouth. The honorable pencil person is Dian Sister."

II. Other Deborahs

The Maid of Orleans. Joan of Arc was a frail girl, and yet she led the armies of France for years against the English, and was overcome finally only through treachery. In this account of her generalship, I have condensed a chapter from "Historical Tales".

Joan of Arc was born at a critical period in history. Her country was in

extremity. For the greater part of a century the dreadful "Hundred Years' War" had been waged, desolating France, destroying its people by thousands, bringing it more and more under the dominion of a foreign foe. The realm of France had now reached its lowest depth of disaster, its king uncrowned, its fairest regions overrun,—here by the English, there by the Burgundians,—the whole kingdom in peril of being taken and reduced to vassalage. Never before nor since had the need of a deliverer been so vitally felt. The deliverer chosen of heaven was the young peasant girl at Domremy. Doubtless little Joan's soul burned with sympathy for her beloved land, asking herself if God could longer permit such wrongs and disasters to continue. Again and again came to her voices; they haunted her; and still the burden of their exhortation was the same, that she should "go to France to deliver the kingdom." It was her enthusiastic belief in her divine mission that moved Joan of Arc. It was trust in her as God's agent of deliverance that filled the soul of France with new spirit, and unnerved her foes with superstitious fears.

Three years passed away. Joan's faith in her mission had grown with the years. Some ridiculed, many believed her. At length came the event that moved her to action. The English laid siege to Orleans, the most important city in the kingdom after Paris and Rouen. If this were lost, all might be lost.

On the 29th the army of relief arrived at Chinon, in Touraine, where the king then was. Joan had journeyed nearly a hundred and fifty leagues, through a country that was everywhere a theatre of war, without harm or insult. She was dressed in a coat of mail, bore lance and sword, and had a king's messenger and an archer as her train.

Charles decided that The Maid should go to Orleans. A suit of armor was made to fit her. She was given the following of a war-chief. At length, on the 27th of April, the march to Orleans began.

On the 29th the army of relief arrived before the city. There were ten or twelve thousand men in the train, guarding a heavy convoy of food.

The arrival of The Maid was announced to the besiegers by a herald, who bore a summons from her to the English, bidding them to leave the land or she would slay them. The commandant of the bastille opposite, Sir William Gladesdale, answered, bidding her to go back and mind her cows.

What succeeded we may tell briefly. Inspired by the intrepid Maid, the besieged boldly attacked the British forts, and took them one after another. The English would not face her in open field, and under her leadership the French intrepidly stormed their ramparts. Joan pressed on; the English retreated; the bastille was taken without another blow. Back to Orleans marched the triumphant Maid, the people wild with joy. All through the night the bells rang out glad peals and the *Te Deum* was chanted. Much reason had they for joy; Orleans was saved. The Maid had fulfilled her mission. France was saved.

History contains no instance to match this. A year before, Joan of Arc, a low-born peasant girl, had occupied herself in tending sheep and spinning flax; her hours of leisure being given to dreams and visions. Now, clad in armor and at the head of an army, she was gazing in triumph on the flight of a hostile army, driven from its seemingly assured prey by her courage, intrepidity, and enthusiasm, while veteran soldiers obeyed her commands, experienced leaders yielded to her judgment. Never had the world seen its like. The Maid of Orleans had made her name immortal.

To All Unknown Heroines. In the new Liverpool Cathedral there is to be a "Lady Chapel", with a magnificent scheme of stained glass windows, commemorating the deeds of women, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Grace Darling. A long list of other famous English women is there. President Noble, in his baccalaureate sermon to the graduating class of Goucher College, called attention to the surprising fact that these windows are dedicated as well to the unknown good women of England. For example, the inscriptions read: "Queen Victoria and all noble queens," "Catherine Gladstone and all loyal hearted wives." "Grace Darling and all courageous women". "Elizabeth Barrett Browning and all who have seen the infinite in things." The designers of the Lady Chapel realized that the goodness that brings no fame to its possessor is just as worthy of being honored as the kind that attracts the attention of the world.

III. Those who Came not to the Help of Jehovah

The Curse of Meroz. Deborah was in an exalted, fiercely vindictive mood when she sang:

> Curse ye, Meroz, said the angel of Jehovah,
> Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,
> Because they came not to the help of Jehovah,
> To the help of Jehovah against the mighty.

Others had been guilty of hesitation, inaction, and their guilt, too, is immortalized in her song. By the watercourses of Reuben there were great resolves of heart, but they came to naught, the people decided to sit among the shepherds and hear the pipings for the flocks. Gilead abode beyond the Jordan, and Dan and Asher came not to the help of Jehovah. But it is the shirking of duty by the people of the little town of Meroz which especially aroused Deborah's fiery indignation. Perhaps Meroz was safely hidden and being itself in no danger had not patriotism enough even to faintly resolve like the Reubenites. They came not to the help of Jehovah.

What Meroz Stands for. The violent outburst of the contempt and anger which men feel who have fought and suffered and agonized, and then see other men who have the same interest in the result which they have, coming out cool and unwounded from their safe hiding places to take a part of the victory which they have done nothing to secure—Meroz stands for that. So Meroz stands for the shirker; for him who is willing to see other people fight the battles of life, while he simply comes in to take the spoils. No wonder Deborah and Barak were indignant. Their wounds were still aching; their people were dead and dying all around them; and here was Meroz, idle and comfortable, and yet, because she was part of the same country, sure to get the benefit of the great victory as much as any.

It was not only personal anger. This cowardly and idle town had not come "to the help of the Lord". Deborah knew that the cause of Jehovah had been in terrible danger. It seemed as if it had only barely been saved. She was filled with horror when she thought what would have been the consequences if it had been lost. And here sat this village, whose weight perhaps might have furnished just what was needed to turn the doubtful scale; here it had sat through all the critical and dreadful day, looking on and doing nothing. It was all her passionate sense of the preciousness of God's government and the danger in which it had stood which burst from her lips when she cursed Meroz.

There are many people always who are in the community and in the world what Meroz was in Palestine. For there is an everlasting struggle going on against wickedness and wretchedness. It never ceases. And the strange and sad thought which comes upon our minds sometimes is of how few people after all are really heartily engaged in that struggle, how few have cast themselves into it with all their hearts, how many there are who stand apart and wish it well but never expose themselves for it nor do anything to help it.

Look at the manifest forms in which men show their will to work for God and goodness. Those of you who have had any occasion to observe it know full well by what a very small number of persons the charitable and missionary works of the church and all operations which require public spirit in a community are carried on. If there is a reform to be urged; if there is an abuse to be corrected in the administration of affairs; if there is some oppressed and degraded class whose rights, which they cannot assert themselves, must be asserted for them; if there is a palpable wrong done every day upon our streets,—most of you know how very few are the people in this city, who, apart from any private interest in the matter, are looked to as likely to take any concern for the public good.

There are in all our cities, and this city has its full share of them, a great multitude of useless men, and of men perfectly contented in their uselessness. Many a man looks back upon his life, and save for the kindly offices which he has rendered to his immediate associates, he cannot remember one useful thing he ever did. He never stood up for a good cause. He never remonstrated against an evil. He never helped a bad man to be better. A merely useless man! His life might drop out of the host tomorrow and none

would miss a soldier from the ranks. No onset or defence would be the weaker for his going. I know not how he reconciled it to himself. *Condensed* from *The Candle of the Lord,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US

Barak had courage enough if Deborah would go with him every step of the way and keep his courage to the sticking point by constantly assuring him of victory. He had not courage enough to stand alone. In the coming battles which you are to wage against wrong and evil, what sort of courage shall be yours?

In all the land of Israel, among all the men and women of all the tribes, there was at first only one woman with faith enough to attempt the overthrow of the enemy. Hers was the grain of mustard seed moving the mountain. "One man or woman who really believes is mightier than ten thousand who hesitate and question and cower. Ever the wavering multitude, in Israel or in America, is looking for the one strong soul that by faith clasps omnipotence and cannot fail."

Our prayer:

Defend us, Lord, from every ill.
Strengthen our hearts to do thy will.
In all we plan and all we do
Still keep us to thy service true. (*John Hay*).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The growth through the Old Testament of the spiritual idea of God.
2. Deborah the first instance of woman in public life: the modern woman's political claims. See "Much Ado about Women," *Atlantic Monthly,* Jan., 1914.
3. Shirkers. See the Second Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is the next thing we hear about the doings of the Children of Israel after the defeat of the Canaanites? (Judges 6.1.) 2. Into the hands of what enemy were they delivered and for how long? (Judges 6.1.) 3. Where were they forced to live? (Judges 6.2.) 4. What was their condition at this time? (Judges 6.4-6.) 5. From what direction did the Midianites come? (Judges 6.3.) 6. Where was the Plain of Jezreel? 7. What does Milton call Gideon? (The Matchless Gideon.) 8. To whom did Christ once say, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe"? (Jn. 4.48.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is meant by "the angel of Jehovah came"? (*Guide,* p. 74.) 2. Why would the beating of wheat in the wine-press be more hidden from the Midianites than on the threshing-floor? (*Guide,* last ¶, p. 75.) 3. What is Gideon's thought when he speaks about the wondrous works of the past? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 75.) 4. How were the words of Jehovah an answer to Gideon's complaint? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 75.) 5. What does "the spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon" mean? (*Guide,* ¶ 8, p. 75.) 6. How does God's call to service come to people now? 7. How did Gideon show his doubt? 8. How did Gideon show his courage? 9. Do you approve of Gideon's cautiousness? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 80.) 10. Why must Gideon destroy the altar of Baal before attacking the enemy? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 76.) 11. What effect must the result of this act have had upon Gideon? (God had prospered this deed, his trust in God must have been increased and his desire for greater deeds must have been augmented.) 12. What effect do you think it had upon his townsmen's willingness to accept him as their leader? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 76.) 13. For what reforms are Gideons needed in our land today?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory J. G. Holland's words beginning "God give us men!" In your Note-Book write an account of the Battle of the Kishon as told by Deborah. Write another account of the same battle as told by an officer under Sisera.

Questions upon the Book of Judges. See page 81. For convenience, questions upon the Books are given all together; only a few should be assigned each week.

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LESSON III—JANUARY 17

THE CALL OF GIDEON

Golden Text

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest. Psalm 65.4

LESSON Judges 6.11-40: verses 11-16, 33-40 printed
MEMORIZE verses 14-16

11 And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. 14 And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16 And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves together; and they passed over, and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. 34 But the spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they also were gathered together after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken, 37 behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken. 38 And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once: let me make trial, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

11. *The angel of Jehovah came.* In verse 12 the thought is repeated—And the angel of Jehovah appeared—but in verse 14 it is Jehovah that looked upon him and said. "Long before the time of Moses, Jehovah must, in the popular mind, have been regarded as belonging to the angelic host, and by degrees he assumed a more and more exalted position; as subjective revelation increased, the more fully did the Personality of Jehovah become realized, and his superiority to the angels recognized, though in the process it was inevitable that the differentiation should not always be complete. When ultimately, under the Mosaic dispensation, the holy Character and the real Nature of Jehovah began to be apprehended, the belief that he personally appeared among men necessarily became more and more untenable; hence, while Jehovah himself receded farther from men, his messenger, or angel, appeared in his stead, and became his representative in all his dealings with men" (*Hasting's Bible Dictionary*)—*Oak.* Or, *terebinth,* RVm.—*Abiezrite.* A native of Abiezer, a division of Manasseh. Josh. 17.2.—*Gideon was beating out wheat.* Although the marauding Midianites had destroyed the increase of the earth, verse 4, he had gathered a small amount of grain. Compare the summoning of Cincinnatus

from his ploughing to be the deliverer of the Romans from their neighboring people, the Æquians.—*In the wine-press.* See below.—*To hide it from the Midianites.* See the Historical Background, p. 76.

12. *The angel of Jehovah appeared unto him and said unto him.* There was goodness in Gideon, or he had not recognized the call of God. See Dr. George Adam Smith's words, ¶ 3, p. 79.—*Thou mighty man of valor.* Such was Gideon's reputation. Dr. George Adam Smith gives this interpretation: This straitened and doubting farmer was doggedly doing the only work possible to him in the circumstances. *That,* say the words in which he is addressed, that is heroism.

13. *And where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of?* Is there not equal need now of some miracle to free us from our present bondage? Gideon means.—*But now Jehovah hath cast us off.* See ¶ 5, p. 76. —*And delivered us into the hand of Midian.* Israel's deplorable condition was Gideon's opportunity, the crisis which brought out the man.

14. *Looked upon.* Or, *turned towards,* RVm.—*And said.* "He looked upon him, and smiled at the objections he made, which he gave no direct answer to, but girded and clothed him with such power as would shortly enable him to answer them himself" (*Matthew Henry*).—*Go in this thy might.* Go in the might of Jehovah, who is with thee, verse 12. Gideon's complaint against God is stilled; his soul responds to the call to be Israel's leader. "There is the fire of a strong human spirit rich in passions in Gideon's bold words. The angel did not rebuke him and say: 'God cannot use you. You will have to have your will and spirit broken before you can be used.' No; he said: 'Gideon, I like you. I like the spirit, the strong passion, with which you speak. Now, go right out and serve God in this your might, and you shall save Israel from the hand of Midian'" (*Speer*).

15. Like Moses before him, Gideon hesitated to assume the leadership of his people, being deterred by the thought of the people's lack of faith in God, the power of the enemy, and his own small reputation.—*Family.* Or, *thousand,* RVm.—*The poorest in Manasseh.* Because of the small number of his kindred he would naturally have only a small following in Manasseh and therefore with the other tribes.—*I am the least in my father's house.* "The blessed work of helping the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men" (*George Eliot*).

25. *Throw down the altar of Baal.* Gideon must do this before attacking the enemy to show his people that Baal, the heathen sun-god, was no god, and that help could come only through the aid of Jehovah.

33. *Assembled themselves together.* East of the Jordan.—*Passed over.* Over the Jordan river.—*Valley of Jezreel.* See p. 76.

34. *The Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon.* Hebrew, *clothed itself with,* RVm. "Is not this magnificent? A man, the vesture of God; a man, the garment of the Spirit Divine! God walking abroad clothed in a man! And yet this is what a man may be. He may be the apparel of the Divine Spirit. The Spirit may be present in him" (*Bowran*).—*Abiezer was gathered together after him.* These are the men who had wished to kill him for throwing down the altar of Baal. See verses 28-32 and ¶ 5, p. 76.

35. *Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali . . . came up to meet them.* Gideon summons not only his own family and tribe, but the men of neighboring tribes. For their location see the last lesson.

36-40. Another proof that he was not mistaken in believing himself called of God for this mission is given in verses 17-24. Two accounts are seemingly given. See the Second Topic. —*Let it now be dry only upon the fleece.* Naturally, the fleece would drink in the dew and retain it much longer than the bare ground; Gideon thinks of this fact and wishes to have a more certain proof of his Divine commission.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *Gideon was beating out grain in the wine-press.* The wine-press was a shallow pit in the ground, possibly surrounded by mud walls: in this confined space he could only use rods for beating out the grain, and it would be a slow process. He did not use the threshing-floor because that was exposed and the enemy would see him there. Oxen were driven round and round a circular threshing-floor to tread out the grain, or by dragging a sledge over it more quickly separated the grain from the straw.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who freed the children of Israel from the Canaanites? What two tribes bore the brunt of the battle? How were they summoned to the contest? Where was the battle waged? What did we learn two weeks ago happened over and over again in the time of the Judges, after the land had been freed from an enemy?

A Time of Peace. The battle on the Great Plain, the Plain of Esdraelon, which Barak led against Sisera, was followed by many years of peace. The Israelites cultivated wheat and barley in the Plain, which has always been very fertile, and raised sheep and oxen. Meanwhile, living on friendly terms with the people of the land, they learned other things from them besides how better to live. They learned an evil thing, to build altars to the gods of these Canaanites, the gods which they called the Baalim, and to worship them, for the Canaanites said that it was Baal who sent the sun and the rain for their crops, and therefore they must worship him.

The Midianite Oppression. The Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East were the people who lived on the high plateau east of the Jordan. They saw their opportunity. The Israelites were disunited and weak, given over to evil practices, and these Eastern Bedouins began to make raids upon the crops in the Plain of Esdraelon. Then they crossed the Jordan with their tents and their cattle, "as locusts for multitude", and overran the Plain. Year after year at the time of harvest they did this, each time pushing their forays farther and farther up onto the adjacent hill country.

The Israelites fled before them, seeking hiding places in dens and caves, and leaving their enemies in possession of their crops and their cattle. When this had continued for seven years Israel was "brought very low because of Midian."

The Destruction of the Altar to Baal. A nameless prophet reminded Israel that the true cause of their suffering was not the power of the Midianites but their own sinfulness. The heart of a young man of the tribe of Manasseh, Gideon by name, was heavy and bitter over the oppression. Why had God forsaken them? As he was beating out wheat in a hidden place he realized that God was summoning him to do something heroic, to be the liberator of his people from the oppression of the Midianites. And at the same time there flashed into his soul, with the voice and power of God, the comprehension that it was not God's neglect but the people's lack of zeal, their moral degradation, their disloyalty to God, which had brought all this suffering upon them. In his own town there was an altar to Baal. It must be overthrown. That very night Gideon demolished it and set up an altar to Jehovah and offered sacrifice. The people were furious the next morning when they saw what had been done. They sought Gideon to kill him. But his shrewd father said: "Will you contend against Baal? If he be a god let him contend for himself. Let Baal strike down the man who insulted him." That seemed wise counsel. The people called Gideon Jerubbaal, that is, Let Baal contend against him. They waited. Nothing happened. Baal was not a god, Jehovah is the only true God, Gideon was his champion, he had proved his right to be their leader.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review the account of the Plain of Esdraelon given in the last lesson, p. 67. The Valley of Jezreel is the wide entrance into the Plain of Esdraelon leading up from the Jordan. Let pupils name this on their outline map of the Great Plain. Call for the location of the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali.

The Midianites were desert nomads living in the neighborhood of the Peninsula of Sinai and wandering northward east of the Jordan; the Amalekites belonged on the desert between Sinai and Southern Canaan; the children of the East were the dwellers on the highland east of the Jordan.

Ophrah was probably near Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

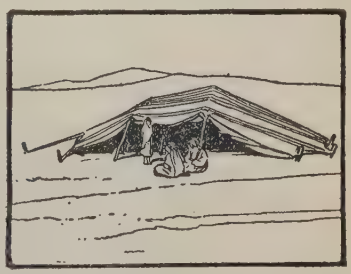
Note how the young man Gideon's despondency fled and he became fired with zeal, eager to be the champion of Israel against the enemy, when once

he was assured that this great task was expected of him, weak though he felt himself to be. It is a great thing for a teacher to inspire young men and young women with the belief that something is expected of them, that God has some work for them to do in the world. Especially is it a great thing to arouse the timid and self-distrustful to a realization of the possibilities of their lives, of the call of God to them.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Recall the scene on the Great Plain when Barak pursued the Canaanites in their chariots, the chariots sinking in the mud, wheels revolving slowly or not at all, Barak and his men on foot overtaking them and putting them to flight. Sketch rapidly on your board the chariot which you drew last week. Now describe the same Plain dotted over with black tents. Draw this tent on your blackboard. In those tents another enemy slept, people who belonged on the east of the Jordan. They had come over and taken possession of the land, and the Israelites had fled from them. They had come with all their possessions, their tents and their cattle and their camels. They rode on camels and the camels which the kings and princes rode had golden chains around their necks like this one (make the sketch). There were two kings, named Zebah and Zalmunna, and two princes, named Oreb, "the Raven", and Zeeb, "the Wolf". These kings and princes wore long red cloaks, and had large rings of gold in their ears. The Israelites were so afraid of the Midianites, as these men were called, that they hid themselves away in dens in the mountains and in caves among the rocks. The Midianites took all their grain and cattle and goats and sheep, and the Israelites did not have even enough to eat.

Now describe Gideon at work beating out a little handful of grain which he had saved from the enemy. Give the dialogue between him and God's messenger. Tell about his destroying the altar to Baal, the heathen god that his people were worshipping, and building an altar to our true God. Sketch this altar of stones. Describe the anger of the people and tell how Gideon's father said, "Let Baal look out for himself." Of course Baal couldn't. The people of Israel now believed that Gideon was chosen by God to defend them from their enemies, and they were ready to come to his help when he sent messengers to tell them he needed them. These messengers blew trumpets like this (make the sketch on the board) and the people came at once.



Gideon was eager to do as God had told him, but he wanted to make sure that it was God who had told him to free his people from the Midianites and that God would help him do this. Tell the story. Throughout let your pupils see Gideon as a young man who was eager to help his people, and who was chosen by God to do a great deed for them. Tell your pupils that they may be like Gideon. Teach them this prayer:

"Dear God, help us to see and know
That thoughtful service makes us grow
A joy to one another."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At the time of this writing there is a peculiar-looking structure in New York City at the corner of Fifteenth St. and Irving Place. Formerly there was a twelve-story building here, and the owners decided to add six stories more. Then they discovered that the old building was not strong enough to bear the weight of the six additional stories. What could be done? Expert engineers solved the problem, and now the six stories are being suspended in the air above the lower twelve, their weight resting, not on the old building, but hanging from heavy girders above, which rest on five pairs of huge columns, two hundred and fifty feet high, erected on each side of the old building. While the work is in progress the six stories seem to hang in mid-air.

Looking on that building I saw there a symbol of all Christian workers. Each one is too weak to bear a great burden of responsibility, utterly unable to stand the strain of attempting great things for God, but the responsibility is borne and the great things are accomplished, because their burden is borne from above. They are able to go in their might, because their might is given them from on high, Jehovah is with them. It is an old story from which we learn this lesson.

For Older Pupils. In England there is an association known as the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association which co-operates with the Y. M. C. A. work. Its members are busy men, travelling from place to place, yet wherever they are they look for opportunities for Christian service, especially in assisting pastors in the mid-week service, in holding Sunday afternoon services in hotels, and promoting clean speech and temperance among travelling men. The kindred association in America is known as the "Gideons". For what work are they especially noted? They aim to put a Bible in every guest room of every hotel in the land, and they are doing it at the rate of five thousand a month. What is the use of this? "The wayfarer, the discouraged, the prodigal have all sent messages to the Gideons of the help they have received. Thousands have read and silently resolved to return to their mother's Bible and her God. It is a silent but potent reminder of God's word and God's way with men."

Why is "The Gideons" an appropriate name for these Christian workers? Readiness for service anywhere seems to be their watchword. We learn today about the Call of Gideon. Would you say that the modern Gideons are called, that they are men whom God has chosen?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Blessed is the Man whom Thou Choosest

The Spirit of God Chose Gideon. He had all the men of Israel to choose from, and out of all the number he selected Gideon. Why? Gideon had all the capacities. He had mind. He could think. He knew why Israel was in serfdom and weakness. He had energy and decisiveness. Power and promptitude are the qualifications for leadership. See how he acted when the hour arrived! Without a word to anyone, he built the altar to the Lord and demolished the idolatrous usurper. And Gideon had soul. The fear of the Lord was in him. He was obedient to the heavenly Vision and Voice. *J. G. Bowran,* in *"A Man: The Garment of God."*

A Gift is a Call from God to Service. Why does God choose men and nations for privilege and high service? It is no easier than to say why living things vary at all. Some are stronger, more beautiful, more richly endowed than others; but none knows why this should be. Behind it all is the inscrutable will of God, choosing, shaping, rejecting: compelling life to perpetuate itself, and driving it to seek fuller and nobler expressions of the soul within. It is enough for us to know that the possession of any gift of real value, however small, is at once a call and a responsibility. It is a proof of God's grace towards us. He has elected us to a place in his kingdom and given us a work to do for him and our brothers. If our gift be less than others the Divine expectation of service is less. To the measure of its worth it counts with the greatest: while the spirit of its exercise ranks on the same plane as

that which directed the service of the Father's only begotten Son. From an *Editorial* in the *Sunday School Chronicle.*

A Few of God's Chosen Men. (The literal translation of verse 34 is, *The Spirit of Jehovah clothed itself with Gideon.*) The Spirit of God remembered India, with its millions and millions of people. The story of the love of God in Jesus they needed to hear, and he clothed himself with William Carey. He remembered Africa, poor, degraded Africa, and he clothed himself with Robert Moffat. The Spirit saw that London needed to hear the sweet and simple Gospel all afresh, told with such winsomeness that unbelief would be well-nigh impossible, and he clothed himself with Charles Haddon Spurgeon. The Spirit saw that America and Great Britain needed to hear the Gospel all aflame, so he clothed himself in Dwight L. Moody. The Spirit saw the students of Scotland. How clever they were! How witty! But how easily they were caught by the doubts of the sceptics and the sneers of the agnostics! They were busy with their sciences, and Christianity and sciences did not seem to agree. The Spirit meant them to know the truth, that the God of Nature and the God of Revelation were one and the same, so he clothed himself with Henry Drummond. *J. G. Bowran,* in *"A Man: The Garment of God."*

II. Lord, I believe, Help Thou my Unbelief

Gideon the Doubter. Gideon was uncertain, not of himself only, but of his people, and of the whole purpose of God that had been declared to them. Oh, my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us, and where be all the miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. We feel something here which cuts all the sinews of hope.

But the strong lesson, which shines so clearly from the story, is that there is no doubt so dark as to be hopeless; none too deep for God to lift a man out of and make him a man of faith and energy. We need that lesson—we of today. The kind of doubt which is meeting many of our best young men upon their entry to manhood, is this kind. Gideon's words have a strong modern ring about them. It is just this cry, that the age of miracles is over; this despair, that we cannot continue to work with the brave beliefs and hopes of our fathers; this failure of faith in the presence and the leading of God himself, which beset us. O, my brothers, if in any degree such feelings have attacked you, remember that they are not new, and they are not incurable. Men have been disciplined in this kind of doubt before; and have been brought out of it to a decisiveness and a power of action which have lifted nations behind them. Some doubt there must be for every man to suffer, who would do God's work in the world. For doubt, if it be honest, means generally the mind to think and the heart to sympathize; and without thought and without sympathy I suppose not God himself could make much of any man. *Dr. George Adam Smith,* in *The Forgiveness of Sins.*

Why has All This Befallen us? Robert came home from church in a thoughtful mood. "As far as I can see," he said to his father, as they walked along, "real success in life depends not upon goodness, but upon cleverness. Everywhere I see bad men enjoying long-continued prosperity and health and happiness, and conscientious, earnest men and women suffering from poverty and ill health and loneliness and despair. But in what lies the reward for the suffering good man?"

"His reward never can fail," answered his father. "What is the reward for being honest under great temptation? It isn't a little thing like being made governor of a state; it's an infinitely bigger thing. It is that the man becomes *more* honest. The reward of controlling your temper isn't something like a house and lot; it is the reward of having a strong character, perfectly controlled.

"If God should tell us that if we'd be true to our best for a few years, he'd make us enormously rich, we'd try harder, I'm afraid. But God says more than that. He says that if we will be true to our best, we shall grow nobler and stronger and more divine. He will give us not a crown of gold, but a crown of life! Divine rewards and punishments are sure. One is the most awful thing that man can conceive; the other is too wonderful for man adequately to appreciate." *Condensed* from *Youth's Companion.*

Gideon's Doubts Overcome. It is apparent that his doubts are overcome as doubt is always overcome, by the constraint of a Personal Influence. When Moses and Jeremiah express to him their doubts of their fitness for the work to which he has called them, God does not tell them they are mistaken, or argue with them on the point. He simply lays his hand upon them; puts, that is, upon their hearts and consciences the constraint of his will; and lo! they are up and ready for the work. Or when Job utters to God the questions which have rendered his mind as raw and torn as ever his poor body is, God answers few or none of these, but reveals himself to the patriarch in his power, and at his presence every doubt is stilled. In the beautiful poetry in which the story of Gideon is told to us, we see the same process related in a more naïve and child-like form. He is met by one whom at first he addresses as if he were a fellow-man. He tells his doubts about himself, about the people, about God. And the other person does not argue or seek to answer him. But instead there grows upon Gideon the sense that he is dealing with God, in the presence of whose command questions grow dumb, and beneath whose hand the sense of weakness and unfitness vanishes away.

It is in no different fashion that men are released today from the hesitation and fear which doubt produces. It is not an answer we need; it is a call. It is not to have mastered this or that answer to our questions; it is to render obedience to a power which will bring us through the submission of our wills to light and to power. *Condensed* from *The Forgiveness of Sins* by *Dr. George Adam Smith.*

III. Cautiousness

The Assurance of the Fleece and the Dew. The dew is the emblem of the Divine Spirit. It was the assurance that God had really called him to this great task and that God's presence would go with him, which Gideon needed. The episode of the fleece and the dew was his way of gaining this assurance. He sought a sign from God in the same way that Moses did. Before undertaking his great task he would be assured that he had not mistaken the call.

Gideon came in the most strenuous hour of all the period, and proved his heroism first by his fear, writes Dr. G. Campbell Morgan. Never criticize Gideon for demanding proof on proof. He was a man so afraid of himself, that he must have proof on proof; but so sure of God, that he was content with three hundred men, and lamps and pitchers and trumpets, to lead an attack upon a great host. Caution and courage are never far apart. Caution is the very soul of courage. Courage is the true expression of caution.

When God Seems to Have Chosen You for a Special Task. If an impression comes into your soul, and you are not quite sure of its origin, pray over it; above all, act on it as far as possible, follow in the direction in which it leads—and as you lift up your soul before God, it will wax or wane. If it wanes at all, abandon it. If it waxes, follow it, though all hell attempt to stay you. *F. B. Meyer.*

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US

"Do not let your youth be wholly spent in the inquiry: What can I get answered? This will appear in time. But be ready to put the great questions: What do I owe to God? What need has he for me in the world? What need have I of him in my own weak nature? The answers to our doubts which in youth we are so confident of obtaining, are not always given to us. Some are never reached, and some we do not care about as the years go on. But always very near to us is the Presence of our God in Jesus Christ; and as we grow in experience not less necessary does the constraint of his will feel to our hearts, but ever more real and indispensable. May God help you to feel that life is just this great moral question: What is the will of God for me?"

"Life to me is a school in which to learn how best to serve," declares Dr. Grenfell, "a school in which we may be taught how best to employ and develop our special talents for service here and, I believe, hereafter."

Our Prayer: O Lord, who art our Guide even unto death, grant us, I pray thee, grace to follow thee whithersoever thou goest. In little daily duties to which thou callest us, bow down our wills to simple obedience under pain or provocation, strict truthfulness of word or manner, humility, kindness; in

great acts of duty or perfection, if thou shouldest call us to them, uplift us to self-sacrifice, heroic courage, laying down of life for thy truth's sake, or for a brother (C. G. Rossetti).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The call to social service may be a new utterance of the voice of God. *Dr. Frances Greenwood Peabody.*
2. The present need of reformers with the spirit of Gideon.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What does Jerubbaal mean, and why was this name given Gideon? (Judges 6.28-32.) 2. Describe the location of the two camps, the course taken by the Midianites in their flight, the place where they were met by the Ephraimites, and the place where Gideon overtook them and captured the kings. (*Guide,* p. 86.) 3. On what occasion did Moses tell the people that Jehovah would fight for them? (Ex. 14.13, 14.) 4. Tell what Ethan Allen said about his being at the Battle of Ticonderoga (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 87) and apply it to this lesson. 5. Tell how Cromwell wished not numbers but quality in his soldiers. (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 87.) 6. Tell the story of Gideon's midnight visit to the camp of the enemy. 7. Tell the story of the spies who went to spy out the land before the Conquest of Canaan; whom did the brave ones say was on their side so that they could overcome? 8. Give Van Lennep's explanation of the way lighted torches could be carried. (p. 84 of this *Guide.*) 9. Of whom is it said that they were "faint yet pursuing"? 10. What complaint did the Ephraimites make and how did Gideon pacify them? (Judges 8.1-3.) 11. What two cities met the doom pronounced in our second lesson on Meroz, and why? 12. What reward was offered Gideon? (Judg. 8.22.) 13. What reward did he accept, and what was the result? (Judg. 8.23-27.) 14. What is said in Ps. 83.9-14, about this destruction of the Midianites?

Questions to Think About. 1. What does *vaunt themselves* mean? 2. Why was the method given in verses 4-7 chosen to sift the soldiers? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 83.) 3. What qualities must the three hundred have possessed? 4. Was it a compliment to be called "a cake of barley bread"? (*Guide,* p. 84). 5. When the Midianites were suddenly awakened from sleep by the noise and the light, what must they have thought? 6. What does 1 S. 14.6 mean? Would it be a good Golden Text for this lesson? 7. What qualities of leadership did Gideon possess? 8. Who are "The Gideonites" of today? 9. Why does their badge have a pitcher and a lamp upon it?

Note-Book Work. Write an account of the call of Gideon.

Questions upon the Book of Judges. (See pages 25-28 of this *Guide.*) 1. Why is it called the Book of the Judges? 2. What sort of men were they who are called judges? 3. Who wrote the Book? 4. How were the early stories preserved? 5. How do we know that they were not collected into one Book before the time of the kings? 6. What may have been the circumstances under which the Book as we now have it was written? 7. What does the Book itself say about the length of some of the judgeships? 8. How may this be understood? 9. What is the oriental attitude toward exact chronology? 10. How do we know that the period covered by the Book is less than two centuries? 11. What does the Book of Joshua tell about the Israelites? 12. What part is repeated in the Book of Judges? 13. How far onward does it carry the history? 14. What did the Israelites learn from the Canaanites during this period? 15. How was warfare with them waged? 16. What was the civilization of the time? 17. What are the three natural divisions of the Book? 18. What is told in the Introduction? 19. What is the framework of each story in the body of the Book? 20. Of what does the Appendix consist? 21. Write an outline of the Book. 22. What can you say about the way in which the stories of the Book are told? 23. What story is comparable to the best episodes in the epic poems of Greece? 24. What song is the oldest extant Hebrew poetry? 25. How does it rank as poetry? 26. What beautiful parable is told? 27. What are the two leading lessons of Judges? 28. What other lessons has the Book for us?

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED

Golden Text

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts. Zechariah 4.6

LESSON Judges 7: verses 1-8, 16-23 printed MEMORIZE verse 7

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him,, rose up early, and encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water; and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place. 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the three hundred men; and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put *them* to flight. 22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host; and the host fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Jerubbaal, who is Gideon.* See Judges 6.28-32.—*Harod.* That is, *Trembling:* see verse 3, RVm.—*By the hill of Moreh.* Or, *from the hill of Moreh* onwards *in the valley,* RVm.

2. *Vaunt yourselves.* Boast, brag.—*Mine own hand hath saved me.* They were fighting under God's banner, and to him must be accorded the victory.

3. *Whosoever is fearful and trembling.* When God needs men for his work, he chooses the hearts courageous. A minister affirms that there are many in the Church who, when the bugle sounds its martial note, suddenly remember an engagement in the opposite direction to the battle. Read the Third Topic.—*Depart from.* Or, *go round about,* RVm.—*Mount Gilead.* Gilead is east of the Jordan, and seemingly cannot be the location here intended. Read Gilboa for Gilead, says Driver.

4. *The people are yet too many.* "The number of God's army looked well, but God took to auditing it; he audited the figures, and a most savage audit it was" (*McNeill*). There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few, 1 S. 14.6. Recall Cromwell's choice of his soldiers, p. 87 of this *Guide.*

6. *Lapped, putting their hand to their mouth.* They prostrated themselves, and lapped the water with their tongues, as a dog laps, verse 5: Driver suggests a way out of the difficulty in this verse by transposing "putting their hand to their mouth" to the end of the verse, for it was those who knelt upon their knees who raised the water to their mouth by their hands.

7. *By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you.* They had proved their zeal for battle by their haste to drink, while the others had kneeled to drink at their leisure. Dr. George Adam Smith, in his "Historical Geography," explains that any one "who has looked across the scene can appreciate the suitability of the test which Gideon imposed on his men. The stream, which makes it possible for the occupiers of the hill to hold also the well against an enemy on the plain, forbids them to be careless in their use of the water; for they drink in face of that enemy, and the reeds and shrubs which mark its course afford ample cover for hostile ambushes. Those Israelites, therefore, who bowed themselves down on their knees, drinking headlong, did not appreciate their position or the foe; whereas those who merely crouched, lapping up the water with one hand, while they held their weapons in the other and kept their face to the enemy, were aware of their danger, and had hearts ready against all surprise. The test in fact was a test of attitude, which, after all, both in physical and moral warfare, has proved of greater value than strength or skill—attitude towards the foe and appreciation of his presence. In this case it was particularly suitable. What Gideon had in view was a night march and a sudden surprise of a great host—tactics that might be spoiled by a few careless men. Soldiers who behaved at the water as did the three hundred, showed just the common-sense and vigilance to render such tactics successful." Jewish tradition ascribes another reason for the choice of the three hundred: the followers of Baal were wont to kneel in their idolatrous worship and those who knelt at the river thus betrayed that they were Baal worshippers.

9. *Into.* Or, *against,* RVm.—*I have delivered it into thy hand.* I have determined to deliver it.

10. *If thou fear to go down.* With his entire force.—*With Purah thy servant.* To reconnoitre.

11. *Then went he down with Purah his servant unto the outermost part of the armed men that were in the camp.* "See him crawling from cover to cover, conscious that his life and the cause committed to him hung upon the breaking of a twig, the flicker of a flame; or whether that half-asleep Ishmaelite on the outermost part of the camp will have energy enough to kick a bit of bush his feet are toying with into the fire and scatter its light five feet farther into the darkness—for if he does, Gideon will be seen" (*George Adam Smith*).

13. *A cake of barley-bread.* "To heare himselfe but a barley cake, troubled him not. It matters not how base we be thought, so we be victorious" (*Bishop Hall*). —*Tumbled.* The disk-like cake of bread is thought of as rolling on its edge like a wheel.

14. *This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon.* "Alike the dream and its interpretation are peculiarly eastern in character. Both would make the deepest impression on those sons of the desert, and, communicated to the next patrol, as the first watch was relieved by the second, must have prepared for that panic which was so soon to speed through the whole camp of Midian. In the tale of this dream the miracle of victory had already begun" (*Edersheim*).

16. *He divided the three hundred men into three companies.* Probably they approached the enemy from three sides, and thus seemed to surround them, verse 21.

18. *For Jehovah and for Gideon.* The familiar Authorized Version reads, *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon,* but the words *the sword* are not in the Hebrew and were supplied from verse 20. Religion in these days was identified with the national cause of the Israelites.

19. *So Gideon, and the three hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp.* "There is a moment in every great war when the bravest troops feel inclined to run; it is the want of confidence in their own courage. The supreme art of generalship is to know just when that moment will come and to provide for it. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I anticipated the moment of fright and flight, and I had twenty-five men ready of cool nerve and decision, and just at the appropriate moment I turned the twenty-five into the host, and the battle was won" (*Napoleon*).—*When they had but newly set the watch.* The guards who kept the middle watch went on duty at ten o'clock.

20. *The sword of Jehovah.* "To know that we are in harmony with the Divine purpose is more than half the battle." "There is but one way in which man can ever help God—that is by letting God help him" (*Ruskin*).—*And of Gideon.* "The Lord comes to the help of those who are willing to fight and makes victory crown their banners: he does not come to the help of those who trust in him to do the fighting for them."

21. *And all the host ran.* "Midian, but half awake, staggers from her tents. Crash on crash! Trumpets blaring! Torches flashing, in front, at rear, right and left! The weird war-cry! The darkness! The confusion! Has not the dream come true? Is not the foe overwhelming? Does not Jehovah fight for them?" (*Matthews*)

22. *And Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow.* The dazed Midianites, suddenly aroused from a deep sleep, thought themselves surrounded, and not knowing friend from foe, they turned against one another.—*And the host fled.* Recall how Abraham and his three hundred and eighteen servants were aided by God in vanquishing the four kings, Gen. 14.13-24.

22-23. See the Geographical Background.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

13. *A cake of barley bread.* Barley is the universal food in Palestine of horses and asses, and sometimes also of draught oxen. Straw is chopped for hay, and the corn winnowed and given separately. Oats are unknown, being a grain confined to much colder climates. But barley is also largely consumed as an article of human food. At least half the bread eaten by the poor is of barley. See 2 Ch. 2.10, where equal parts of wheat and barley are allotted to the artificers at the temple. But it is considered a proof of poverty and hardship to be compelled to live on barley bread, which, as all those who have eaten it for any time know, is much inferior in nutritive qualities to wheaten. Gideon's family were poor in Manasseh and he the least in his father's house. The Midianite invader, like any proud Bedouin today, would call the despised Israelite who tilled the soil "a barley cake." *H. B. Tristam* in *Natural History of the Bible.*

16. *Torches within the pitchers.* There is a kind of torch used by the police of Cairo, called a "shealeh," which may throw some light upon the means employed by Gideon and his three hundred men to terrify the Midianites and overthrow them. It burns without a flame, except when waved through the air, which causes it at once to burst into a blaze. Its burning end is carried in a small earthen jar, or pitcher, and it thus answers the purpose of a dark lantern; but experienced thieves are set upon their guard by the small light which it emits. *Van Lennep, In Bible Lands.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What conquest had the Israelites won in the Plain of Esdraelon? Who was then the judge? Which two tribes were the nucleus of the Israelite force? How had God helped in this victory? What was the next enemy from whom the Israelites suffered? To what extent were they

oppressed? Whom had God chosen to free them? How did he strengthen his courage? How many warriors did he assemble for the battle? How many had the enemy? Where was the enemy encamped? Name the three detached mountains on the east of the Plain of Esdraelon.

Reducing the Army. We learned last week that the Midianites, one hundred and thirty-five thousand strong, were encamped in the Valley of Jezreel near the hill of Moreh. Gideon gathered an army of thirty-two thousand and pitched his camp on the height overlooking the Valley of Jezreel. No doubt Gideon was proud of that army, though it was far outnumbered by that of the enemy. Yet the word of the Lord came to him to reduce his army. Why and how verses 1-8 tell.

Reconnoitering. Instead of making an attack at once Gideon went with his servant Purah to the Midianite camp to reconnoiter. Stealthily they approached. The Midianites had no sentries on duty: had they not come like this for seven successive years, and had not the Israelites always fled before them without attempting resistance? They did not fear the Israelites; they only despised them. Two men, however, were awake, and one was telling his dream. He had seen a round barley cake roll against his tent and overthrow it. "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel," said his comrade, who had heard of this mighty man of valor; "into his hand God hath delivered Midian, and all the host."

The Stratagem and its Effect. The dream and its interpretation heartened Gideon: from the enemy themselves as from God he gained assurance of victory. He returned to his camp with this victorious shout, "Arise, for Jehovah hath delivered unto your hand the host of Midian." How his three hundred used trumpets and pitchers and torches to fight is told in our printed verses 16-23.

The Jealous Ephraimites. Gideon's strategy had been successful with the three hundred, but he needed a larger number to exterminate the enemy; for this purpose he called on the Ephraimites to intercept the Midianites at the ford of the Jordan. Afterwards Gideon had to pacify the Ephraimites, who chided him sharply for not calling them in the first place. Possibly the others had taunted them for not coming into the battle until the enemy was already put to flight. Gideon, calm and forbearing, showed that he knew human nature when he assured them that their victory was greater than his. "What are you talking about?" some one represents Gideon as saying. "You say we have the best of the glory and honor? Not at all. Look at the enormous slaughter you have inflicted on the enemy, and you have captured the two leaders, the two princes. It is true that at first we took the vintage; but in this case the gleanings are far greater, bigger, and more glorious than the vintage." "Then," says the record, "their anger was abated toward him when he had said that."

Faint yet Pursuing. Gideon came to the Jordan and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing. The men of Succoth and Penuel refused them food, and Gideon vowed vengeance on his return. At Karkor, far in the desert, he overtook the Midianites and gave battle, capturing the two kings of Midian and smiting the host. On his return he carried out his vow at Succoth and Penuel, and also slew his captive kings.

Gideon's Reward and Later History. So great was the rejoicing after the complete overthrow of the enemy, that the Israelites wished to make Gideon their king, but he refused the honor, saying, "Jehovah shall rule over you." But he continued to be their leader, and ranks in history as the greatest of their judges. Yet, sad to relate, there was apostasy in the last days of his life. He accumulated wealth and his example led to undue luxury of life among the people, and he set up a priestly ephod in his own city of Ophrah, a rival to that at Shiloh, for consulting the Lord. And all Israel played the harlot after it there; and it became a snare unto Gideon and to his house.

History's Judgment on the Deliverance from the Midianites. Many memorials of this battle are pointed out by Dean Stanley: the name of Gideon's altar, of the spring of Harod, of the rock of Oreb, of the wine press of Zeeb; whilst the Prophets and Psalmists allude again and again to details not mentioned in the history—the rod of the oppressor broken as in the day of Midian—the wild panic of the confused noise and garments rolled in blood—the streams

of blood that flowed round the rock of Oreb—the insulting speeches and the desperate rout, as before fire and tempest, of the four chiefs whose names passed even into a curse.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Turn to your map of the Plain of Esdraelon and note the Valley of Jezreel, which is the real continuation of the Plain of Esdraelon eastward to the Jordan, between the Hill of Moreh on the north and Mount Gilboa on the south. This is the scene of our lesson.

The Israelites were encamped on the south of this valley on the height of Gilboa above the Spring of Harod. This spring is on the northern base of Mt. Gilboa and is now called by the Arabs Ain Jalud (Fountain of Jezreel). It is a pool fifteen feet in diameter and naturally this abundance of water has made this spot a favorite camping ground, not only through Biblical times but at the present day. The water from the spring flows northward a short distance and then turns eastward and drains the Valley of Jezreel.

The Midianite camp was two miles away from the Israelites, on the northern side of the Valley of Jezreel. When the Israelites attacked them at night the Midianites fled eastward, down the Valley of Jezreel, hoping to cross the Jordan to their own land on the East. They escaped as far as Beth-shittah, toward Zererah; that is, in the neighborhood of Bethbarah (Bethshan) where there is a ford over the Jordan. See the map. The border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath, means, says Dr. George A. Smith, the deep bank over which the Vale of Jezreel falls into the Valley of the Jordan, above the now unknown Tabbath. Here over the ford the two "kings" had crossed, but the two lesser chiefs, the "princes," were intercepted by the Ephraimites and slain.

Let pupils locate the two camps on their map of the Plain of Esdraelon, also Bethbarah, and read paragraph 35, page 7, of "In the Master's Country."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Think of the amount of planning which Gideon gave to the thing in hand, and especially of the shrewd way in which he surprised the enemy. Christ once deplored the fact that the same amount of wisdom was not used in Christian as in worldly warfare: you remember how his lord, in the parable, commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light. In your Sunday-school work, are you planning wisely? Are you using the best methods? Do you teach the lesson always in the same way, or do you wisely take your pupils by surprise at times? Do you study them and do you know their attitude toward the right as well as Gideon knew the attitude of his men? God is working through you: he is depending on you: do not fail him in the task committed to you. Be willing to give of your best in time and thought and energy if you would be a co-worker with God.

In preparation for next week's lesson read now p. 95.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

You will not need any help in making this lesson vivid. Study the Geographical Background, above, and let your pupils see the scene. Describe the fear of the twenty-two thousand and their quick departure when given the chance: see Dr. Talmage's words, ¶ 4, p. 90. In telling about the test at the spring show Tissot's picture No. 56, "Gideon Chooses the Three Hundred", or Doré's, Wilde, No. 411. Draw on your blackboard this picture

of a dog lapping water. The lesson truth which your teaching will leave in your pupils' minds is that God works through people, but he helps his workers.

I would omit the account of Gideon's visit to the enemy's camp, the dream and its interpretation, for there is so much in this lesson that with your pupils there is danger lest it may seem to them but a series of strange happenings with no meaning. As you tell about the midnight attack, sketch the eathernware pitcher, the torch and the trumpet. Doré's picture "Gideon Puts the Midianites to Flight," Wilde No. 412, may be shown.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. On the eve of the Civil War in England, Oliver Cromwell was made captain of a troop. He wanted a company of men upon whom he could depend. Men came in large numbers to enlist, but Cromwell would not take them all, for he was very particular about the kind of men he should have in his troop. He would not take a man just because he was of noble birth: "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain, that knows what he is fighting for, and loves what he knows, than what you call a 'gentleman,' and is nothing else." And he would not take a man merely because he was an experienced fighter. "I must have men who have the fear of God before them," he explained. Gradually he sifted out the men until he had a regiment of one thousand. "A few honest men are better than numbers," he said. This regiment, known as Cromwell's Ironsides, became famous: they never were beaten. "Had Cromwell done nothing else but raise and discipline that magnificent regiment he would deserve lasting fame," says the historian.

Last week we saw a man assembling a regiment of warriors. Who was the man? Who was the enemy? How large was his regiment? Our lesson today is about "Gideon and the Three Hundred": why was the number of this famous regiment reduced? How?

For Older Pupils. When Saladin looked at the sword of Richard Cœur de Lion he wondered, we are told, that a blade so ordinary should have wrought such mighty deeds. The English king bared his arm and said: "It was not the sword that did these things, it was the arm of Richard!" Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, heard a minister ascribe to God all the glory of that victory. After listening as long as he could stand it, Ethan Allen arose, it is said, and observed: "Please, Parson, I was there, too." "Sit down, thou presumptuous man," sternly returned the parson.

Lest the Israelites should vaunt themselves saying, Mine own hand hath saved me, Gideon's army was reduced to a very small number. How many had he summoned to fight the Midianites? To what number were they reduced? How was the first reduction made? The second? How do you explain that test?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Man's Dependence on God

The Vision of the Golden Candlestick. It was sixteen years after the return from the captivity in Babylon. The task before Zerubbabel, Governor of Jerusalem, was tremendous. How should he rebuild the temple of God and re-establish the national and religious ideals of Israel? Visible material resources were small, workers were few and feeble and poor and dispirited, the opposition seemed unsurmountable, the discouragements overwhelming. Then came the prophet Zechariah to urge the accomplishment of what was impossible to Zerubbabel alone. This was the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of Hosts. This is the central truth in the prophet's vivid imagery of the

golden candlestick, suggested to his imagination by the candlestick in the Tabernacle. The candlestick represents Israel as the instrument of God. The oil symbolizes the influence of the Spirit of God, the flame of the seven lamps being the consecrated energy of Israel kept at burning zeal by the Divine Spirit. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. At once the words of Christ come to mind: If ye have faith and shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. Faith, not in man's might nor power, but in the Spirit of Jehovah of Hosts.

The thirty-fourth verse of our last lesson, literally translated, says that "the Spirit of Jehovah clothed itself with Gideon." It was not Gideon's might nor power, but the Spirit of Jehovah clothed with Gideon, that explains his achievement.

Lincoln's Dependence on the Spirit of God. During the Civil War, Richard Oglesby, Governor of Illinois, lost all hope of the success of the cause he had so much at heart, and wrote President Lincoln that he thought all was lost. In answer he received this telegram: "Dear Dick: Read Exodus 14.13: Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Abraham Lincoln."

In "Orations and Addresses," Bishop Fowler gives this incident: General Sickles lost a leg at Gettysburg and was in the hospital at Washington. Mr. Lincoln called upon him. General Rushing was present at the interview. I have this statement of the interview from the lips of General Sickles and also of General Rushing. General Sickles asked: "President Lincoln, were you not alarmed during the Gettysburg days?" Mr. Lincoln answered: "No, General, I was not; some of our people were, but I was not. Stanton thought we had better put the archives on a gunboat, but I thought we would come out all right." General Sickles asked: "President Lincoln, why were you not alarmed?" Mr. Lincoln hesitated a little and said: "Now, General, you have asked me, I will tell you. I went into my room, locked the door, got down on my knees and said, 'Oh, Lord God, I have done absolutely everything I can, and now you must help!' and God told me he would give me Gettysburg, and I believed him."

The Power for Service. Not by might nor by power did Luther face the wealth and prestige and power of Rome and achieve the Reformation. Not by might nor by power did William Booth meet poverty and scorn and contumely and bring about the great Salvation Army. Not by might nor by power did William Lloyd Garrison single-handed attack the system of slavery and set in motion the forces that at length freed four million slaves, nor David Livingston set out with a light heart to attack the system of slavery in Africa and fight with wild beasts and savage men. And what a long list of the world's heroes can one call to mind, who relied not on their own strength but on the aid of the Spirit of Jehovah of Hosts. The courage of William, Prince of Orange, in arming the farmers of Holland and Flanders to revolt from the tyranny of King Philip and Bloody Alva seemed so wonderful to a foreign ruler that the latter asked what country and kings were his backers. This was the answer of the brave William: "You ask me if I have entered into any formal alliance with a foreign potentate. Before I took up the cause of these distressed provinces, I entered into a compact with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords."

The Power that May be Ours. My way led me up hill, and right at the foot I saw a boy on a bicycle. He was pedalling up hill against the wind, and evidently found it tremendously hard work. Just as he was working most strenuously and doing his best painfully, there came a trolley-car going in the same direction—up the hill. It was not going too fast for the boy to get behind it, and with one hand to lay hold of the bar at the back. Then you know what happened. He went up that hill like a bird. Then it flashed upon me: "Why, I am like that boy on the bicycle in my weariness and weakness. I am pedalling uphill against all kinds of opposition and am almost worn out with the task. But here at hand is a great available power—the strength of the Lord Jesus. I have only to get into touch with him and to maintain communion with him—though it may be with only one little finger of faith, and that will be enough to make his power mine for the doing of this bit of service which just now seems too much for me." And I was

helped to dismiss my weariness and to realize this truth. *Condensed* from *The Life of Fuller Purpose,* by *J. Stuart Holden.*

II. God's Dependence on Man

The Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon. The weakness of the modern Church, wherever there is weakness, is largely due to Christian men crying "the sword of the Lord," but forgetting to add "and of Gideon." We propound ideals of a nation purged of social evils, of a world submission to God and his Christ. We pray for the ideals to be realized, but have we the heart to fight for the realization, have we the head to think out plans of campaign, have we the strategy, as well as the daring, which will ensure the victory? In too many of our churches an evangelistic or social reform campaign that calls for audacity and self-sacrifice meets with the coolest reception from the large majority of the members. Where is the good, say these, of attempting the impossible? It is all very well to be enthusiastic, but it is not common sense. Let the church do its own little work in its own little way, and that is all that little people require. But the Lord's work in the world is not a little work; it is a big work that for its doing demands men and women of high courage. *Sir W. R. Nicoll.*

Go and Be Used by God. Church history is still being made by God and Gideon. It is still Gideonites versus Midianites, and over all, God. Gideon and his three hundred are to-day on missionary ground—a thin skirmishing line holding back, and, sublime audacity! even trying to press back, the embattled millions of heathendom. Gideon and his three hundred are to-night in the slums—a plucky, persevering little detachment, wrestling with Apollyons in the valleys and with misery in the alleys. Gideon and his three hundred will be here to-morrow because they were there yesterday, and because, as the explicatory principle of the whole process, Jehovah—who might create a million angels a minute to do his will—prefers still, as he has ever done, to work through some son of Joash of the Abiezrites or child of Jesse the Bethlehemite. The Lord is an austere man, who reaps where he has sent Moses, or Daniel or Paul to sow, taking without question of the gold of Solomon or the spices of Joseph of Arimathea. Go and be used by God—that is the peremptory order to all, the ethical finality of life. *C. A. S. Dwight,* in *God and Gideon.*

He could not Ask God's Help for a Good Cause without Giving his Own Share of Help. Mr. Pendleton was giving a dinner to several friends. As they went into the dining-room, one of the guests happened to say that the latest news from China was that the famine was growing more serious, and that thousands of people were face to face with actual starvation.

All heads were bowed as Mr. Pendleton asked a blessing. He added to it this petition: "And grant that as we partake of thy gifts to us, we may remember with compassion thy suffering children in China."

The plates of soup were before the diners, but as Mr. Pendleton took up his spoon, he paused; suddenly his eyes filled with tears, and he asked his guests to excuse him. In a moment he returned, with a check in his hand, which he laid beside his plate.

"I had a vision," he said. "I saw our Lord standing beside one of those poor little huts in China, and looking this way, knowing that we knew all about the distress over there, and I couldn't eat till I made out a check to the China Relief Fund."

The dinner proceeded, and he led in a conversation witty, sparkling, genuinely mirthful. Mr. Pendleton is a man of keen intellect, his reading is wide, and his fund of anecdote large.

Just before they rose from the table, one of the guests said: "Mr. Pendleton, you must let us all help in the China matter. When you send that check, send one for me." And the others agreed heartily.

As they were leaving, one guest said to another: "You don't suppose that Pendleton did that thing to draw a contribution from us?"

"He never thought of such a thing," said the other. "He does things in a dramatic way because he acts from perfectly natural impulses. When he talked about the suffering in China, he couldn't help praying about it; and

having prayed, he couldn't eat till he had done something to help. When he had done that, he ate with a light heart. What he did to-night is merely one of his peculiarities. I wish that all peculiarities were as useful to humanity."

III. Cowardice

The Deserters. A little child had evolved a picture which she called a cat. "But where is his tail?" asked her mother. The child looked puzzled for a moment and then replied: "Why, it is in the ink bottle yet!" So two-thirds of Gideon's men called themselves soldiers, but they did not look like soldiers, for being fearful and trembling they were lacking in that most important soldierly quality, courage. Gideon did not give it to them, he just blotted them out of the scene altogether—bade them pick up their swords and depart.

Possibly these men who were afraid when they stood on the height and looked at the strong encampment of the enemy spread along the opposite side of the valley, had been the very ones who had bragged most of what they would do. It was the Crusaders who were the boldest at the council-chamber who were the first to cry "Sauve qui peut" (Let him who can save himself) at the battle below the Horns of Hattin, when Saladin practically made himself master of all Palestine, for Jerusalem fell three months later.

"I suppose those cowardly men went off congratulating themselves, saying, 'We got rid of all that fighting, didn't we? How lucky we have been, that battle costs us nothing at all.'" observes the Rev. DeWitt Talmage. "But they had none of the joy or the spoils of the victory. So the time will come when the host of darkness will be routed, and Christ will say to his troops: 'Well done, my brave men, go up and take the spoils. Be more than conquerors forever!' and in that day all deserters will be shot! Would not you rather be of the three hundred that fight than of the twenty-two thousand that run?"

A Modern Instance. The story of Gideon and his faithful three hundred is recalled by the report of a missionary in China. In this modern instance the Gideon was no less a personage than the new Chinese premier, who is himself not a Christian. During the recent revolution about sixty students in the town where the premier lived decided that it would be a fine act of patriotism to organize a Red Cross band, and report for service at the front. The premier was consulted, gave his consent and much valuable help in the organization, even to the extent of accompanying the men to the battlefield himself.

But unfortunately for the volunteers, the test came unexpectedly, in the shape of news of heavy fighting at the front. When the premier was ready to leave he found that he had but thirty of the original sixty who had offered to go. Shortly after leaving, another man turned back, but twenty-nine remained true. *To his utter astonishment the premier found that every one of the twenty-nine was a Christian.*

It is a pleasure to note that the force of the lesson was not lost on the premier, for he came to the wise conclusion that Christianity has certain elements of value that the Chinese cannot well do without. The admiration of bravery is universal among the races, and it is incidents like this, of Christianity put to actual test, that will go far toward opening the hearts of these people to the message of the gospel. *Service.*

How to be Morally Brave. Bishop Warren said that when his company was ordered into battle the first time, a terrible fear came over him as they approached the scene of conflict, and his knees shook beneath him. Marching next to him was a gigantic Irishman, and it was a great comfort to look up into his pleasant face. Whenever Mr. Warren felt his courage failing him, he would rub up against his burly companion, and the touch of that firm, broad shoulder filled him with new strength and courage. Enoch walked with God; thus beautifully does the record express the thought of Enoch's communion with his Maker, and what strength and courage must have been his. Would you be morally brave? Then go and do likewise.

God is above All. It was the thought of the God who guided that sent Carlyle out from the stone-mason's house into the city where he was to take up his weapons for the poor and against entrenched wrong. "One night, late," he writes, "I rode through the village where I was born. The old kirk-yard tree, a huge, gnarled ash, was nestling itself softly against the gather-

ing twilight of the North. A star or two looked out, and the old graves were all there—and my father and my sister—and God above us all."

Ignorance may go with flippant, jaunty step towards the unknown future, because it understands not the peril and the struggle, and the fierce conflict hidden behind the horizon. But the great soul, loyal and wise, knows the storm dwelling in the bosom of futurity. Remembering that God is above us all, and that he is not one, but two, the great heart goes bravely on, coercing the lips to smiles, and therefore is equal to every emergency. *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis,* in *All the Year Round.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US.

We also are "laborers together with God."

While there is much in Gideon's rude life that we can not approve, it has yet for us several forceful lessons. He lived up to the light he had; do we? His faith in God was supreme; is ours? He pressed on "faint yet pursuing"; is our zeal lasting? He gave to God the glory; do we realize God's guiding care? Let us derive an inspiration from Gideon's life, and make our lives more trustful, faithful and zealous. "May God quicken our sluggish lives to the pace, and lift them to the pitch, of his!"

Our Prayer: "Dear Father, how often I have failed thee because I forgot whose was the sword and the bow whereby I had won my victory. Forgive me for boastful word and arrogant pride and heart that has dared to conceive itself safe in its own strength. Let me learn today the sweet lesson of complete trust. Keep my hands busy with useful work; engage my heart wholly with loving and gentle motives; make me reverent, and ready to meet thy will!"

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The work of the Gideonites, the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association. See also the Industrial Service Movement of the Y. M. C. A. See "Industrial Service," *Youth's Companion* for Dec. 25, 1913.
2. Religion is partnership with God. See p. 21 of 1913 *Outlook.*
3. Faith against figures.
4. Gideon an example for modern reformers.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What happened between the time of Gideon and Samson? (Judges 8.32-12.15.) 2. What do we mean by "the test of Shibboleth?" (Judges 12.) 3. Read the account of the word of the Lord coming to Zechariah foretelling the birth of his son John the Baptist. (Luke 1.) 4. To what does "Then," verse 8, refer? 5. What was the Nazirite vow? (Num. 6.1-12 and ¶ 6, p. 93.) 6. For what purpose does Eccl. 10.17 say one should eat? 7. Tell about Samson's riddle. (Judges 14.) 8. Tell about Samson's feat with the jaw bone and the gates of Gaza. (Judges 15.4-16.) 9. Tell about Samson's death. (Judges 16.18-31.) 10. What does Judges 15.20 say about Samson as judge? 11. What is Samson called in "the roll-call of heaven," in the Book of Hebrews, and how can you explain his being classed with David, Moses and Enoch. (Hebrews 11.32; *Guide,* p. 98.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What was the motive that actuated Gideon in his campaign against the enemy? 2. What was the motive that actuated Samson in all his great exploits? (Revenge.) 3. Compare Samson's desire for revenge with that of Esau or with that of Joseph's brothers. 4. Was Samson's last act an act of sacrifice? 5. What do you think of the character of Samson? 6. In what is Samson an example to us? 7. In what is Samson a warning? 8. What great poet has done more than justice to Samson, and what is his poem called? (Milton's "Samson Agonistes.") 9. What musician has written an oratorio entitled Samson? (Handel.) 10. How is wine or strong drink harmful? 11. Name some other things which it is bad for one's health to eat or drink. 12. Why should young people be total abstainers? 13. Why should young people totally abstain from cigarette smoking?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Read Milton's "Samson Agonistes," and commit a portion of the poem to memory. In your Biographies of the Judges, write Part II of the Life of Gideon. Or, write a story of Gideon's attack as told by the Midianites.

LESSON V—JANUARY 31

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON (Temperance Lesson)

Golden Text

Beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink. Judges 13.4

LESSON Judges 13.8-16, 24, 25 MEMORIZE verses 12-14

8 Then Manoah entreated Jehovah, and said, Oh, Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. 9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day. 11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass: what shall be the ordering of the child, and *how* shall we do unto him? 13 And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. 14 She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, I pray thee, let us detain thee, that we may make ready a kid for thee. 16 And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt make ready a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto Jehovah. For Manoah knew not that he was the angel of Jehovah.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and Jehovah blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *Manoah.* "Manoah was a person of such virtue that he had few men his equals, and without dispute he was the principal person in his country. And Manoah had a wife celebrated for her beauty, and excelling her contemporaries" (*Josephus*).—*The man of God.* The angel of Jehovah, verse 3. Compare the account of the announcement of the birth of Isaac, Gen. 18, and of the birth of John the Baptist, Luke 1. "The Old Testament is a Hebrew book, and its thought and speech and imagery are Hebrew. What happened then happens now, and God still speaks just as he spoke long ago. You remember how once you were sorely perplexed and knew not which way to turn. A letter came to you, and the light streamed upon your path. There was no miracle: it was only a letter; but if you had been a Hebrew, you would have lifted up your heart in thanksgiving, and you would have gone out and said: 'The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, This is the way: walk in it.' Or was it a friend who visited you and furnished you with the needful information? Then, if you had been a Hebrew, your account of it would have been: 'Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto me, and talked with me.' Such was the manner of the Hebrews. They saw God everywhere; they recognized his hand in everything. And is not this the true interpretation of life? The angels of the Lord are continually visiting us, and what we need is a heart to recognize them though they come in drab raiment, and to hear the Word of the Lord though it be spoken through human lips" (*Dr. David Smith*).—*Come again.* A first visit is recorded in verses 3-5.—*And teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.* "A body that don't get started right when he's young ain't got no chance" (*Huckleberry Finn*). See the Second Topic.

9. *God harkened to the voice of Manoah.* "God will not fail some way or other to guide those by his counsel who are sincerely desirous to know their duty, and apply themselves to him to teach them" (*Matthew Henry*).—*As she sat in the field.* She was looking after the sheep, probably.

12. *Now let thy words come to pass.* Or, *Now when thy words come to pass, what etc.,* RVm. Compare Mary's words: Be it unto me according to thy word, Lk. 1.38.—*What shall be the ordering of the child?* "In their home on the hillside, where the cottages of Zorah clustered overlooking the Philistine Plain, they were frequently disturbed by the raiders who swept up the valley of Sorek from Ashdod and Ekron. They had often wondered when God would raise up a deliverer as of old, some Deborah or Gideon to end the galling oppression. Now the answer to many a prayer and hope was coming, and in their own home the hero was to be cradled. We cannot doubt that this made them feel the pressure of duty and need of widsom. Yet the prayer of Manoah was one which every father has need to present" (*Watson*). —"Raising a boy and breaking him to harness is more interesting than raising a colt. Moreover, it pays better when it is well done" (*Youth's Companion*).

14. *She may not eat.* Her son was to be trained in the same rigid abstinence.—*Vine.* Or, *grape-vine,* RVm. "The taboo doubtless from the beginning included the vine itself, as did that observed by the Rechabites (Jer. 35.6) or that imposed upon the Roman Flamen Dialis, who was not allowed (Plutarch) even to walk under a trellised vine" (*Int. Commentary*).—*Neither let her drink wine or strong drink.* "It is not the last drink that ruins a man, but the first" (*Hadley*).—*Nor eat any unclean thing.* Anything unclean according to the ceremonial law. Happy art thou, O land, when thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness, Eccl. 10.17. For the Nazirite vow, see Num. 6.1-12.

15-23. Compare Judges 6.17-23.—*For Manoah knew not that he was the angel of Jehovah.* These words explain his wishing to provide food for him, verse 15.

15. *Samson.* Hebrew, *Shimshom,* RVm. The word means "a little sun."—*Jehovah blessed him.* See the Third Topic.—*Move.* "A rare word meaning to disturb or stir up: compare 14.19; 15.14, also 3.10; 6.34; 11.29." Samson no doubt early displayed an eagerness to free his people from the tyranny of the Philistines: it was for this he had been born—he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, verse 5—and the promptings which he felt for this task were from the Spirit of God.—*Nahaneh-dan.* That is, *The camp of Dan,* RVm. It was near Kirjath-jearim, in Judah.—*Esthaol.* A mile and a half east of Zorah, where his parents lived.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God.* The order of Nazirites was the nearest approach to a monastic institution that the Jewish Church contained. It was, as its name implies, a separation from the rest of the nation, partly by the abstinence from all intoxicating drink, partly by the retention of the savage covering of the long flowing tresses of hair. The order thus begun continued till the latest times. Not only was Samuel thus devoted, but Elijah in outward appearance was under the same rule; in the time of Amos, there was a flourishing institution of Nazirites; and at the very close of the Jewish Church there were at least two who bore in their habits and aspect the likeness of the earliest of these ascetics—John, the son of Zachariah, the austere preacher in the wilderness, and Jacob, or James, the Bishop of the Christian Church at Jerusalem. *Stanley's Jewish Church.*

14. *Nor eat any unclean thing.* "There is no such filthy food as swine's flesh; for, behold, one rabbi has said that ten bushels of leprosy came into the world, of these the swine took nine, leaving but one for all the rest of the world."

The Jews have always attached great importance to questions affecting eating and drinking. This shows itself often in curious ways. When Jewish friends of the stricter orders visited us in Tiberius, they would drink a cup of tea, provided no milk from our vessels was put in it. They would eat no

bread baked by Christian hands, but biscuits made by machinery they took without scruple. Their share in the world to come would have been endangered otherwise. *William Ewing.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What is the regular recurrence of events as chronicled in Judges? Who was the first great judge and deliverer, who was her helper, and from what enemy did she free her people? Who was the next great judge? What enemy did he drive out of the land? Where did the Philistines live? Which tribe was their nearest neighbor and most likely to suffer from them?

Abimelech the King, and Tola and Jair the Judges. Gideon's victory over the Midianites was followed by a long period of peace. Upon his death the people once again turned to idolatry. Abimelech had his sixty-nine brothers, sons of Gideon, slain that he might be proclaimed king. Jotham, Gideon's youngest son, alone escaped. Jotham's interesting Fable of the Trees, spoken to the men of Shechem who had chosen Abimelech, is the oldest recorded fable. Abimelech kept control by continued bloodshed and met his death in an attack upon Thebez. It is interesting to note that at this time the Israelites had fortified cities: the inhabitants of Shechem were able to close their gates against Abimelech, and when further pressed they were able to defy him by barricading themselves within their tower.

We know little about Tola and Jair, the two succeeding judges.

Jephthah. For many years the Philistines on the west and the Ammonites from the east oppressed Israel. The Gileadites chose Jephthah for their leader and utterly routed the Ammonites. Jephthah had made a vow that if God would give him the victory over the Ammonites he would offer up for a burnt offering "whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me", when he returned in peace. His only child, a daughter, came joyfully to welcome him: "he did with her according to his vow."

Next we hear of civil war with the Gileadites and Ephraimites who had not joined the Gileadites in their campaign against the Ammonites. Jephthah, at the head of the Gileadites, was the victor. The Gileadites held the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites. Whenever after that the Ephraimites wished to cross the Jordan into the territory of the Gileadites they would deny that they were Ephraimites. Then they were put to the test of "Shibboleth". "Say now Shibboleth", said the men of Gilead. "Sibboleth" they would answer, not being able to pronounce it correctly; their ancestry was thus disclosed and they were slain.

Three Other Judges. Three judges after Jephthah are mentioned; Ibzan, Elon and Abdon.

The Philistine Oppression. It was when the children of Israel had again done evil in the sight of Jehovah, and the Philistine yoke was grievous in the land, that the wife of Manoah, a worthy man of the tribe of Dan, had a vision and a promise of a son, a son who should be a Nazirite from his birth, and who should begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. The story of Samson occupies one-sixth of the Book of Judges.

Other enemies of the Israelites appear on the scene and then disappear, but the Philistines, like the poor of whom Jesus spake, the Israelites had always with them. They are first mentioned in the Old Testament before the confusion of tongues at Babel (Gen. 10.14) and Zechariah (9.5-7) describes their cities as still flourishing in his time.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Recall the four parallel regions of Palestine, p. 58 of Lesson I. The Philistines occupied the larger half of the Maritime or Coastal Plain which lies south of Mt. Carmel. Their Plain had formed a part of the allotment made to the tribe of Judah. The two tribes of Dan and Judah were the nearest neighbors of the Philistines, and they were the ones who suffered the most from their oppression. There were five great cities on this Plain, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. Gaza was the last city on the road to

Egypt, "the outpost of Africa, the door of Asia." It was three miles from the sea. This was the Philistine capital and here Samson wrought several of his exploits and he here met his death.

Assign ¶s 20-24, 81, of "In the Master's Country."

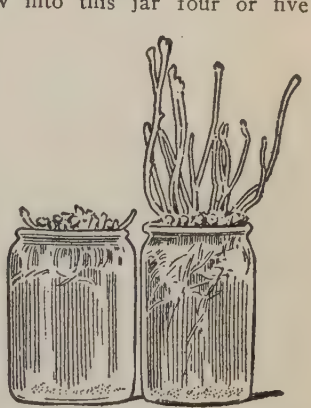
THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Teachers of boys or young men will wisely use this lesson, not for a discussion of Samson's exploits and sins, but for a discussion of his one great virtue, his total abstinence. And with the wine and strong drink from which his pupils should abstain the teacher will include cigarette-smoking. Many good men smoke, this he will readily admit, and will limit his talk to a proof of the evil effects of cigarettes upon youth under twenty-one years of age. Our magazines and papers are full of convincing facts about the evils that result from cigarette smoking. The habit of smoking cigarettes is becoming almost universal among the boys attending the public schools in some sections of our country, it is said. Are your pupils among the number who are thus lowering their physical and mental and spiritual vitality? So present facts that your pupils will not only listen but will feel the force of your words and will willingly sign pledges which shall include the promise of total abstinence till the age of twenty-one from all intoxicating liquor and tobacco in any form.

The week before you teach this lesson, at the close of the lesson period, tell your pupils that you are going to perform an interesting experiment. If you have the *Sunday School Times* for June 7, 1913, read Mr. C. W. Barnes' article entitled "Poisoning Plants and Boys". Here is his experiment for the benefit of those who can not read the entire article.

Take seedlings of beans and peas, place on a piece of tulle stretched over the mouth of two small jars filled with water, so that most of the roots will be immersed, the seed leaves and stems being above the tulle. A large glass jar (fish bowl will do) should be inverted over each small jar, with mouth resting on a plate containing a shallow seal of water. Slightly tip one of the covering jars, and by means of bent tube blow into this jar four or five mouthfuls of cigarette smoke. The jars should then be covered to exclude the light and remain in the warm room for a week (60° to 65° Fahr.).

The tall stems on the right of our illustration show how seedlings of beans grow in one week when exposed to pure air. What four or five mouthfuls of cigarette smoke will do for the plants is shown by the stems in the other jar. It will be found that the plants exposed to the smoke will be small, stunted, with thick stalks growing obliquely, horizontally, and even downward—"Drunken Plants". The plants can't stand up straight, and "stagger" in growing. Boys can't grow upright and strong and manly when their lives are poisoned with cigarette fumes.



Plants Exposed to Smoke. Plants not Exposed to Smoke.

These plants, if placed in the pure air and sunshine, will regain a more normal growth; but will never be as thrifty, as large or as strong as those not having been subjected to the poisonous cigarette fumes. Show the plants again after a week's exposure to the pure air. Just so is it with boys. The moral: Stop smoking cigarettes and do it now.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Get some of your pupils to talk about the baby in their home, his cunning ways and their love for him. Talk about a father's and mother's love and care for their babe. Then briefly tell the lesson story, dwelling upon the father's prayer that God would help them do what was best for the baby, and tell them how to teach him to do right, so that he might grow into a

good, true man. One of the things he was to be taught was not to drink wine or strong drink. Ask from what other things he ought to be kept. Impress the thought that just as that father loved his babe and wanted to do everything he could for him, so our heavenly Father loves and cares for his children.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When the people whom we call Greeks came into the country of Greece they sowed grain and planted vineyards and olive groves and raised sheep and goats, but they and their fields were in constant danger from attacks by wild natives and ferocious beasts. Then the strong, heroic Greeks went out to fight and overpower their enemies. They brought back the hides or the heads of monsters they had slain, and the grateful people in later years regarded these human heroes as half divine; they erected altars and brought offerings to them as to their gods. Of course you have heard about Hercules and his wonderful deeds, and you know all about the lion, the snake, the boar and other animals which he slew unaided. There is an Israelite hero named Samson who was wondrously strong; like Hercules, he killed a lion without weapon of any sort. But the Israelites of his time, while they lived a rude life and were very far from understanding the true nature of God, never made the mistake of supposing Samson to be half divine; they never made a false god of him and worshipped him as the Greeks did their heroes. Today we hear about the birth of this Hercules.

For Older Pupils. We often say to ourselves: "I would gladly do my duty, if I only knew what it is." That was the attitude of Manoah and his wife toward their son. What was this son's work to be? How did Manoah entreat Jehovah in regard to their duty to him?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Total Abstainers

Beware, I pray thee, and Drink no Wine nor Strong Drink. Samson was a Nazirite and kept the vow of total abstinence from intoxicating liquor. It is fitting that our Golden Text should remind us of his one great virtue. See the "Lesson's Suggestions to Teachers."

Beware of Cigarettes. Were there born today a boy destined to begin to save our country from the evils against which she must contend, our prayer for him would be that he should abstain not only from wine and strong drink, but also from that other great national menace, cigarette smoking. Our missionary illustration today is not a reminder of the need in foreign fields, but of the statesmanship in non-Christian lands which our own country needs to emulate.

When China's people were enslaved by the opium habit, China did not hesitate to sacrifice an annual revenue of over thirty millions in order to break up the slavery and consequent degeneration and degradation of her people. How heroically the nation has since been trying to overcome this gigantic evil, all the world knows. Fifteen years ago Japan feared the same fate as China. Children in the common schools were smoking cigarettes. Then the national congress passed a law prohibiting the use of cigarettes by young men under twenty-one years of age. Said Mr. Nemoto, the congressman who introduced the bill: "We fear that our country may come down to the miserable condition of countries like China or India, because tobacco, like opium, contains poisons which benumb the nervous system and weaken the mental power of children addicted to smoking, and thus give a deathblow to the vitality of the nation. If we expect to make this nation superior to the nations of Europe and America we must not allow our youths in common schools, who are to become the fathers and mothers of our country in the near future, to smoke."

Dr. D. H. Kress closes a long article in the *Sunday-School Times* about the Cigarette Peril with these words: "When the boll-wevil was discovered in the South, we turned the government scientists loose, and authorized them to spend the tax payers' money liberally in the hope of defending our national cotton

crop. Shall we give less protection to our national crop of boys? Shall we continue to close our eyes to this monstrous evil which is leaving its blight everywhere? Or shall we follow the example of the enlightened countries, like Japan and China, and suppress the manufacture and sale of cigarettes to our youth?

Royal Abstainers. The Emperor of Germany has long been a total abstainer, and for many years Emperor William has issued warnings to his people against the evil of drinking intoxicating liquor. "I know very well," he said in his speech to the Naval Cadets in 1911, "that the pleasure of drinking is an old heritage of the Germans. We must henceforth, however, through self-discipline, free ourselves from this evil in every respect. In earlier times it passed for extraordinary cleverness in a youth to imbibe a large quantity of alcohol and bear it. As a young officer I had occasion to see such examples, but I have never myself participated."

The Emperor ascribes largely to alcoholism the rapid decline of Germany's birthrate, and the ever-increasing number of crimes, suicides and accidents recorded in the Fatherland. And sixty per cent of epileptic, insane or immoral people are the children of drunken parents. His alarm over these facts has led the Emperor to show his people a sound example. Always a very moderate drinker he is now a total abstainer. From the day of his silver jubilee he has tasted no liquor, not even beer. At the state banquets he drinks lemonade.

King Emanuel III of Italy, Alfonso of Spain, King Gustavus IV of Sweden and Ferdinand I of Bulgaria are also total abstainers.

II. A Child's Right to a Fair Start in Life

What shall we Do with the Child that shall be Born? When does the character of a child begin to form? a wise physician and philosopher was asked. At least a hundred years before it is born, was his answer. In the character of parents and grandparents and great grandparents lies the child's predisposition toward right or wrong. In the story of Hannah and Samuel, and in that of Elizabeth and John the Baptist, as in that of Manoah's wife and Samson, the close link between the mother's consecration and the character of her child is affirmed.

The Child's Rights of the Spirit. The cry of the child is not only a cry for wages and for bread; it is a cry for the rights of the spirit, for instruction in the meaning of life, for opportunity to achieve the moral self. It is the plea of outstretched hands and tender voices that youth should not be allowed to die atop and that the souls of the children shall not be forgotten by those who gave them birth.

As a Protestant, I gladly recognize the loyalty to the home exhibited for ages by the Jewish race, and the safeguards placed for centuries around the home by the Catholic Church. Lincoln's early home tells all Americans that the bleakest, most prosaic cabin may be the birthplace of civic virtue and religious faith. Whatever the home of our future citizens shall be, whether in city or country, in mansion or apartment house, in wealth or in poverty, let us resolve it shall be more than walls and furniture, that it shall shelter the spirit, and nourish character, and open toward the sky. *Condensed* from an *Address* by *Dr. W. H. Faunce.*

What shall we Do for the Children who do not have a Fair Start in Life? "It requires little thought to see that street children are not getting a fair chance," declares a writer in a "New York Kindergarten Association" pamphlet. "They do not receive the care, watchfulness and love that ought to be an indispensable part of every young child's life. Their home—a few small rooms shared with brothers and sisters, and perhaps a boarder or two, and presided over by parents who have to give their last bit of energy in the struggle for food and shelter—cannot afford that which ought to be the largest part of any child's education—a decent home.

The one, of course, without which there can be no home, is the mother. But when she has to leave early in the morning for a day at scrubbing, or washing, or rolling cigarettes, or running a sewing-machine, as a mother she has practically ceased to exist. The home which practically does not exist; the mother who is so work-driven, so far away, so ignorant, so poor, that

as far as her children's needs are concerned, she does not exist; the swarming out on the streets to play, to fight their own battles, to build their own lives from the earliest years—these things are the common lot of hordes of tenement children.

The children of the New York tenements are shut-outs. Early in the morning they leave their home, and are shut out—locked out. The street is their playground, their nursery, and their family dining room, for there, from a pushcart, they will buy for a few pennies their healthful and bountiful midday meal of pickles and sausage, or ice-cream. If they are cold in the street, they shiver and snuffle; if they are hot, they perspire or grow languid. If they get into mischief, a policeman is very likely to get them out. The last place they would think of going to when hungry, or hurt, or sick, would be home, for they are shut out of their home."

Are there children in your city or village who do not have a fair chance to get started right? Are there children who do not have the watchful care and love that should be every child's birthright? What is being done for these unfortunate children? What are you doing for them? What can you and your class do for them?

III. The Meaning of Samson

His Meaning to his Own Age. It is not strange that many a modern reader of the Bible should stumble over the story of Samson and ask how it is possible to believe that such a man was really raised up by God to do such work and live such a life. There is, however, a very simple principle which helps us to meet this difficulty, a principle in accordance with which the whole Bible is constructed. That is, that if God would make a revelation, he must do it in language or other symbols of thought which those to whom the revelation is given can understand.

If we apply this principle to the story of Samson, we are to remember the condition of Israel when he lived. They were a half-civilized nation of mountaineers, a collection of tribes without any central government, scattered along the hills of Palestine. There was but little serious observance of the Mosaic laws and ritual, while at the same time Jehovah was held to be their national Deity and invisible King, and the ark and the priesthood of Shiloh were reminders of the God whom their fathers had served centuries before. The times of the Judges in Israel were times of lawlessness and confusion so great that only the establishment of David's monarchy saved the state from destruction and the religion of Moses from oblivion. In particular, the moral life of the Hebrews had sadly deteriorated. Multitudes had gone after the gods of the Philistines and those impure Phœnician deities whose worship was an infamy, whose service was open sin. The whole nation was corrupted by these associations and, as might be expected, fell a prey to their heathen neighbors. All seemed to be going to destruction, and the reason was that Israel had forsaken God and did not observe his law.

Now, to make them realize just this one truth, that in God was their strength, does Samson appear to have been raised up. He was consecrated to Jehovah from his birth, and his abstinence from wine and his uncut hair were the signs of his consecration. God endowed him with supernatural strength as long as he kept his Nazirite vow. In his personal character he shared all the vices and follies of his race and age. He was morally weak, just as they were weak. He delighted in adventure as a true mountaineer. He frolicked with danger like a genuine barbarian. But he was gigantically strong in body as long as he kept his vow. The country rang with the fame of his exploits. The Philistine oppressors trembled at his coming. What did he make them realize? Simply this, that God could give strength to those who kept his law. The truth was presented in a way which the rude marauders of both Judea and Philistia would feel. Condensed from *The Sinless Christ*, by *Dr. George T. Purves.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US.

Professor Rauschenbusch's Prayer for the Babies. O God, since thou hast laid the little children into our arms in utter helplessness, with no protection

save our love, we pray that the sweet appeal of their baby hands may not be in vain. Let no innocent life in our city be quenched again in useless pain through our ignorance and sin. May we who are mothers or fathers seek eagerly to join wisdom to our love, lest love itself be deadly when unguided by knowledge.

Our Pupils' Prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we would take heed to our ways now in our youth, we would strive for the mastery, we would be temperate in all things. We need thy help in keeping the solemn pledge that we have signed, or the solemn resolve that we have made, to let intoxicating liquor and all that would defile and harm us severely alone. With thy help we shall not falter in this our purpose. For Christ's sake we ask it.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

The National Liquor Dealers' Journal admits that "the moral and religious forces of the nation are against the liquor business. Unify these forces in support of a definite policy, and the end is here." What shall that definite policy be? Does the Gothenburg system of eliminating private profits, high license, or prohibition, offer the best solution of the liquor problem? See the *Atlantic Monthly,* vol. 72, p. 538; vol. 95, p. 302-8. *North Am. Rev.* vol. 144, p. 498; 147, p. 121; *Independent,* vol. 67, pp. 168-78; *Outlook,* vol. 91, pp. 341-3; Dec. 16, 1911; July 4, 1914; *Sunday School Times,* April 18, 1914.

2. What shall be the ordering of the child? See the Second Topic; also "What is the Home for?" *Outlook,* Dec. 16, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. See the Review Questions, p. 102. 2. Read the whole book of Ruth and be able to tell the complete story. 3. Who are "she" and her "daughters-in-law", verse 6? 4. What were the names of Naomi's husband and two sons? 5. To what does the "giving their bread" refer? (Verse 1.) 6. What was the god of Moab? (1 K. 11.33.) 7. What do you know about the land of Moab from 2 K. 3.4; Isa. 15 and 16? 8. What was the ancient law in regard to the marriage of Israelites with those of another nation? (Dt. 7.3.) 9. Where do farewells usually take place in eastern lands? *Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 101.) 10. What is the position of an unmarried woman in the East? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 101.) 11. Tell the story of the gleaners, Ruth II. 12. What are some Eastern customs which Chapter 2 includes? (*Guide,* p. 102.) 13. What was the law in regard to the treatment of a widow by the next of kin? (*Guide,* p. 102.) 14. Whom did Ruth marry at Bethlehem and what are the names of Ruth's son, grandson, and great-grandson? (Ruth 4 14-17.) 15. What sort of daughter was Ruth during Naomi's ten years' stay in Moab? (Verse 8.) 16. During her life in Bethlehem? (4.15.) 17. What greatly loved wife had been buried near Bethlehem? (Gen. 35.19.) 18. What can you learn about the Book of Ruth as a whole? (*Guide,* pp. 28, 29.)

Questions to Think About. Who are meant by "his people", verse 6? 2. What does the sentence "as ye have dealt with the dead" mean? (*Guide,* p. 100.) 3. What four things does Ruth assert that she will share with her mother-in-law? 4. What means Ruth's expression about Jehovah in verse 17? (*Guide,* p. 101.) 5. Who did the harder thing, Ruth or Orpah, and why? 6. Why did not Orpah return also with Naomi? 7. Do you blame Orpah? 8. What qualities does Ruth show? 9. Which one do you admire the more? 10. Did Ruth ever have cause to regret her great decision? 11. Do you think she would have regretted it if it had turned out unhappily for her? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 107.) 12. What should you do before making an important decision? 13. What should you do after making it? (*Guide,* ¶s 4, 5, p. 107.) 14. What led Ruth to chose Jehovah as her God? 15. What characteristic of Naomi's should every Christian have? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 107.) 16. How may the Book of Ruth be regarded as a missionary book? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 103.)

Memory and Note-book Work. Learn Thomas Hood's poem entitled "Ruth". In your Biographies of the Judges, write the Story of Samson. Or, write Samson's life and exploits as told by the Philistines.

LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 7

RUTH CHOOSES THE TRUE GOD

Golden Text

**Thy people shall be my people,
and thy God my God. Ruth 1.16**

LESSON Ruth 1: verses 7-18 printed MEMORIZE verses 16, 17

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread. 7 And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house; Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept. 10 And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. 11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have a husband to-night, and should also bear sons; 13 would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me. 14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god; return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her she left off speaking unto her.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

7-8. *She.* Naomi.—*Her daughters-in-law.* Ruth and Orpah.—*The country of Moab.* See p. 103.—*His people.* The chosen people of Israel.—*In giving them bread.* A severe famine in her own land had driven Naomi with her family to Moab, verse 1.—*The place where she was.* In the country of Moab.—*Her two daughters-in-law with her.* See "Light from Oriental Life."—*As ye have dealt with the dead.* "There are those who consider all references to their dead as a useless clouding of the sunshine of life. O, what do they not lose out of the sacred treasury of love who banish or suppress all mention of their departed loved ones! I see no signs of such a tendency in Naomi's words" (*Singer*).—*Rest in the house of her husband.* See p. 101.

11-15. *Have I yet sons that they may be your husbands?* The Levirate (from *levir*, a brother-in-law) law is recorded in Dt. 25.5-10; according to this law, had Naomi possessed other sons, they would have married the widows of their brothers.—*It grieveth me much for your sakes.* Or, *it is far more bitter for me than for you*, RVm.—*Orpah kissed her mother-in-law.* The Greek version adds, "and returned to her people."—*Clave.* Clung to, remained with. "The way to be comfortable is to make others comfortable: the way to make others comfortable is to appear to love them: the way to appear to love them is to love them in reality" (*Bentham*).—*Her god.* The god of Moab was Chemosh: Num. 21.29; 1 K. 11.33.

16-18. Ruth vows to share four things with her mother: her lot, her nationality, her religion, her grave. "The simple dignity of the iteration in varying phrase till the climax is reached beyond which no promise could go, the quiet fervor of the feeling, the thought which seems to have almost a Christian depth—all are beautiful, pathetic, noble." "It is only the great-hearted who can be true friends; the mean and cowardly never know what true friendship means" (*Charles Kingsley*).—*Thy God my God.* The ancient idea was that each people had its own god, and in going to another land one must necessarily serve the god of that land: compare 1 S. 26.19 where David declares, "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods." Ruth's affection for her mother was so great that she would not leave her, even though that decision involved the giving up of her own country and its god: her decision was farther-reaching than she fully realized, and she and her descendants became worshippers of the only true God. "Sometimes one suspects that the reason goodness is not more popular in modern life is that the wrong people have taken hold of it, or that it has been taken hold of in the wrong way" (*Gerald Stanley Lee*).—*There will I be buried.* See p. 102.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *They went on the way.* In Eastern lands farewells seldom take place in the house. Ruth and Orpah fulfilled custom in going with Naomi a short distance on her way. When Naomi thought that they had gone far enough to show her fitting respect, she stopped to dismiss them.

8. *Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead.* What Naomi said shows how great was her love for her daughters-in-law. Contrast with this beautiful story the proverb that is current today in Palestine: "Were a mother-in-law to love her daughter-in-law, dogs would go to Paradise." While in Damascus we were more than once told to "buy a bunch of flowers to appease your mother-in-law."

8. *Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead.* Naomi here refers, I think, to her daughters' kindness to her sons while they were yet living. But Jewish commentators do not so interpret her words. "Ruth and Orpah applied themselves to the preparation of the grave clothes for the dead", says the Midrash. And modern Jewish commentators explain the use here in the Hebrew of the masculine form of speech, instead of the feminine gender, as called for, because these women did the work of men in providing what was needed for the dead; or because these women manifested in the hour of their bereavement the strength of will, the self-command, the control over their emotions, which we usually consider characteristic of men, and in their eager and wifely zeal to do all that love and respect demanded, suppressed for the time being all thought of their own loss and sorrow.

It is interesting to note the special care which the people of Moab once bestowed upon their dead, as seen in the ancient dolmens still preserved in that land. A dolmen is an enclosure made by roughly-hewn stones covered with a flat rock. Within, by the bones of the dead, rings and tear bottles have been found.

Bas-Relief of a Moabite. The Original is in the Louvre

9. *Jehovah grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband.* A woman in Eastern lands can find rest only in the house of her husband. There is no place in the East for an unmarried woman, whether maid or widow, and the best wish that Naomi could utter for these two young widows was

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that they might be speedily married again. They would be much more likely to find husbands in their own land than in hers, for they were from a people hated by the Judeans and they were, moreover, penniless.

12-13. *If I should even have a husband tonight, and should also bear sons; would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands?* It was the law that the next of kin in the family of a dead husband who died childless must marry his widow. Naomi is reminding these two young widows that she has no sons who could marry them.

16. *Thy God my God.* Chemosh is the tribal diety of Moab. In the Museum of the Louvre, Paris, is preserved the Moabite Stone on which is an inscription of Mesha, King of Moab, stating that in the middle of Ahab's reign, when Moab was subject to the King of Israel, Chemosh enabled him (Mesha) to win victories over Israel, and secure the independence of Moab.

16. *Where thou lodgest I will lodge.* There is nothing finer or more pathetic to me than the way in which missionaries unlearn the love of the old home, die to their native land, and wed their hearts to the people they have served and won; so that they cannot rest in England, but must return to lay their bones where they spent their hearts for Christ. How vulgar the common patriotisms seem besides this inverted homesickness, this passion of a kingdom which has no frontiers and no favored race, the passion of a homeless Christ. *Dr. P. T. Forsyth.*

17. *And there will I be buried.* This showed the climax of Ruth's devotion, since for an oriental to be buried in a strange land was almost as abhorrent as it is for the Chinese today. Recall the expression so frequently found in Kings, "slept with his fathers".

17. *Jehovah do so to me, and more also.* This expression refers to the custom that sometimes prevailed of slaying an animal when a formal oath was taken, and Ruth thereby means that she asks to have the same fate as such a victim if she fail to keep her vow.

Chapter 2. To understand this chapter recall the fact that the farmers in Palestine, even unto this day, do not have their houses on their farm lands, but all live in houses closely huddled together in a village, and go out to their harvest fields in the early morning, taking their bread with them, and returning at night. If the fields are very far away they sleep on the ground or under a booth during the nights of the harvest. Bands of reapers go from one harvest district to another. Women and children follow the reapers and glean every stray wisp that the reapers overlook.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the heroine of our second lesson this year? What did she do? What qualities did she possess? What did Gideon do? What did Samson do? What sort of age was the time of the Judges?

Judges and Ruth Contrasted. And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land: thus begins the book of Ruth which follows the book of Judges. No greater contrast could be found than between these two books. In turning from one to the other we pass from wild scenes of bloodshed to quiet domestic life, and it is difficult to realize that both belong to the same land and time.

The Book of Ruth. See pages 28, 29 of the Introduction of this *Guide*.

Naomi's and Ruth's History briefly Told. When the famine came of which the first verse speaks, a Bethlehemite family, Elimelech and his wife Naomi and their two sons, left their home and settled in the land of Moab to escape it. There their sons married two daughters of Moab, Ruth and Orpah. Ten years passed, father and sons had found their graves in the alien soil, and Naomi and her daughters-in-law were left alone. Naomi determined to return to her native home. What the two daughters decided to do is the theme of our lesson text.

Naomi and Ruth reached Bethlehem, and though "the whole city was moved about them", no one seems to have offered help. Naomi told the women to call her Mara, Bitter, rather than Naomi, Pleasant, for she went away with husband and sons and returned bereft of them all.

It was the time of barley harvest, and Ruth went out to glean after the reapers so as to support her mother and herself. Providentially she was led to

the fields of Boaz, a prosperous kinsman of Elimelech, and Boaz honored her for her devoted care of Naomi. Beautiful are his words to her: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Ruth the Moabitess, the daughter of an alien and hated race, by the constancy and unselfishness of her devotion to her mother, and the heroism which no sacrifice nor privation could daunt, by the strength and yet gentleness and humility of her character, not only won the love of Boaz but overcame the prejudice of the people against her and secured their acceptance of her as one of the people of the God of Israel. As the wife of Boaz she found that "asylum" which Naomi had thought could not be hers in the Hebrew land, and as the ancestress of David, Israel's great king, she was honored above all the Hebrew women of her time.

The Missionary Lesson of the Book. From Bishop Bashford's book, "God's Missionary Plan for the World," I condense these words:—"Ruth was a Moabitess; that is, she belonged to the race which the Jews had been commanded to annihilate, a race whose corruption merited annihilation and whose destruction in general would have been for the good of humanity. But to show that this harsh command rested upon the law of each nation, as of each individual, reaping what it sows, and was not a mere arbitrary decree, the Bible presents this picture of one member of that nation, who, because she rose above her inheritance and environment and sought pardon and protection at the hands of the God of all the earth, was providentially guided to the knowledge of the true God and at last was incorporated into the chosen people. Ruth married a Hebrew immigrant, and through him learned to love the true God. Through her choice of the ideals of the Jews and her acceptance of the Jewish faith Ruth was incorporated into the Jewish nation; and a Moabitess, the child of an outlawed nation, became the grandmother of the noblest king of Israel and the ancestress of the Lord. The brief story of Ruth, who in her sorrow turned to the God of the universe for comfort, is the inspired effort to teach the Jews that their God is no tribal divinity, but the God and Father of us all. The book of Ruth was inspired by the Holy Spirit to reveal the universal and missionary character of the Old Testament religion."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

When Elimelech and Naomi left Bethlehem for Moab they left fields that were sown with stones on the rocky Judean hills for what was then a veritable garden spot, the land of Moab. Moab occupied a part of the tableland east of the Jordan Valley: its eastern limit was the desert; its southern, Edom; its western, the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley. Its northern border was at times the River Arnon and at others nearer the Wady Heshban, at the northern end of the Dead Sea. This tableland is about 3000 feet above sea level, and 4300 feet above the Dead Sea. Today it is a great pasture land for sheep and goats, cattle and camels.

To reach Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth had to descend into the hot Jordan Valley, which at the head of the Dead Sea lies 1300 feet below the ocean, and then ascend to Bethlehem. Bethlehem lies on a terraced hillside six miles south of Jerusalem. Today at one end of the village towers the Church of the Nativity; at the other, the slender spire of a German mission, and between are the closely built white limestone houses. The people are Christians, and are more self-respecting than in most towns of Palestine today. The men wear a distinctive, bright-colored turban well back on their high foreheads and the women wear large white cotton headdresses which fall far down over their backs, and are ornamented in front with silver chains from which silver coins hang. They are especially attractive-looking, these women of Bethlehem, I think, though Robert Hichen writes (evidently with no thought of Naomi in his mind) that, "strongly-built and active, the matrons of Bethlehem look very imposing as they go about their affairs and I should scarcely think that they live in great subjection to their husbands. That they make alarming mothers-in-law I can well believe."

Assign ¶s 59, 60, 84, "In the Master's Country."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Ruth made her resolve that Jehovah should be her God, because he was Naomi's God. Had Naomi, believer in Jehovah though she was, been less lovable a character, less attractive a personality, Ruth would never have been led to her great decision. A teacher's personality is an important factor in the winning of his class for Christ. He must himself be winsome if he would win. Religion is oftener caught than taught. "We may borrow the brush of a great painter, but unless we can get a glint of the painter's genius we shall do as badly with his tools as with our own." We may follow the best approved methods in our teaching, our lesson material may be pedagogically faultless, but unless we have a glint of the Great Teacher's spirit, our teaching will be without power.

Our Sunday-schools have a special day called "Decision Day," and for weeks beforehand teachers are preparing their classes for it, and are praying that when the day comes their pupils may be led to make the great decision. For older pupils this is wise; adults must weigh well the great step. Those who have gone astray must be converted, and conversion is the product not only of revelation (God's work) but of reflection (the individual's placing himself in a certain attitude towards God). But little children who are living under Christian influences do not need a long period of deliberation before deciding to be a Christian. As Ruth followed Naomi, so they will follow Christ: as Ruth chose the True God, so will they, today. Why should they wait for a stronger motive or a more convenient season? So present the beautiful story of Ruth's great choice, teachers of young girls, that your girls will make the same choice. Teachers of young boys may wisely impress today the lesson of steadfastness to a resolution made, a purpose formed (second topic), and in connection with the lesson about Samuel next week ask the boys to decide and then, recalling by questions today's lesson, leave in their minds the will to abide by their decision.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Tell the whole story of Ruth today, and tell nothing else. Picture Naomi as a lovable grandmother, and throughout the story show how unselfish Ruth was. At the close ask your pupils about their grandmothers, and let them tell you by what services they can prove to their grandmothers that they love them. Use these penny pictures: Ruth and Naomi, Wilde No. 414; Ruth Gleaning, Brown No. 1976 or Tissot No. 103.

The story may be told in seven scenes. (1) Naomi's home in Bethlehem: (2) Naomi on her way to Moab with her family; (3) The new home in Moab and the death of the father; (4) The new daughters and the death of the sons; (5) The return to Bethlehem: (6) Ruth caring for her mother by gleaning in the fields; (7) Ruth's new home and the happy grandmother. The following account from Robert Bird's "One Hundred Bible Stories for Children" will be suggestive to you for the story after the arrival in Bethlehem.

Ruth wore the dress of the village girls, of deep green and bright red, with a white veil streaming over her shoulder, and a row of coins upon her brow; and she was a pleasant sight as she went up and down the stony path from the gate in the wall to the women's well, bearing her earthenware pitcher of water. As she traversed the path, her eyes strayed over the plains of dry grass and the fields of russet and golden grain; for it was the rich harvest-time, and she was very poor.

Rising in the morning before the clouds were red over Hebron, she went down into the valley where the harvesters were at work, and followed the reapers and binders, picking up, as a gleaner, all the stray heads of barley she could find. As the binders were women, she kept by them; and they talked kindly to her, for they knew her.

When Boaz, the farmer, came down from the village to see how the work went on, he called, "God be with you," to his reapers; and they answered, "May God bless you." Turning to the women, he asked the name of the strange damsel, and spoke kindly to her, calling her his daughter, and bidding her keep close to his maidens and no one would touch her, and not to leave his

fields. If she was thirsty, she could drink from the water-bottles provided for the reapers.

Kneeling before him with head bowed, as if this farmer were a king, Ruth thanked him for his kindness to a stranger; and he replied that he had heard of her goodness to Naomi, her mother, and praised her.

When the mid-day heat was great, the reapers gathered in a shady place, and Boaz bade her come and share their bread and he gave her parched corn, as much as she could eat. In the afternoon they rose to work again, and Boaz told the reapers to let her glean among the sheaves, and to pull out a handful here and there, and let it fall for her to get; and she gleaned there till the sun went down over the hills. What she gathered was too much to carry away, and she sat down and beat the barley out between two stones, and tying it up in her veil put it on her head, and went home with a light step. Naomi was astonished when she opened out her store in the little house; for she had gleaned more than a bushel of barley, and she did not know that the farmer was a near relation.

When she told Naomi where she had been, her mother exclaimed that Boaz was a relative of her own, and she was glad to hear that he had given Ruth leave to glean in his fields during the whole of the harvest-time. And so it came about that every day at the red dawn Ruth went singing down the rocky pathway to work with the reapers in the warm Eastern valley; and as the wheat-harvest followed close upon the barley-harvest, she worked for many days, returning home at night with her ruddy cheeks burnt brown with the sun, to lay her heap on the floor of her mother's house; for they were laying up a little store with which to bake bread in the months of wind and rain that were before them in the coming winter. But as time went on they did not need to live in poverty, for Boaz married Ruth at the end of the wheat-harvest; and so this Moabite girl became the great grandmother of David, the most famous king of Israel.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is the last story book that you have read? Did it have a happy ending? Did it have a happy beginning? Why does every one like the story of Cinderella or Sinbad the Sailor? Do you know of any man or woman who as a boy or girl was poor or sick or in trouble but whose life afterwards was very happy? We all like to have good things happen to our heroes and heroines at the right moment. Who is the heroine in our lesson today? Where did she live? Point out Moab on the map. She was young, but she had had a great sorrow—what was it? With what two others was she walking along a hot, dusty Syrian road? In what direction were they going? Why did Naomi want to go there? What hard decision did the two girls have to make? Why would it be hard to leave Naomi and return to their own home? Why would it be hard to go on with Naomi to Bethlehem? Which do you think would be the harder to do? Our lesson tells us how Ruth decided, and this decision brought great happiness into her life. Do you ever turn over to the end of a book to see if it ends al lright, and then, satisfied, go back and read the story through? Let us do this today. Turn to the last chapter and read verses 14-17.

For Older Pupils. Have you read any of the novels written by Hall Caine? Did you like them? Do you consider him a competent authority as to what constitutes an interesting story? "There is no book in the world like the Bible," he says, "and the finest novels ever written fall short in interest of any of the stories it tells." One of the most beautiful stories in the Bible is about Ruth the Moabitess. "No doubt the story is a love story, and is designed to set forth the power of love to overcome all the alienations, hostilities, and prejudices of nature and of that second nature which we call 'habit.' But it is not a story of romantic love between a young man and a young woman. It is the story of a woman's love for a woman; and, strangely as it would sound in the ears of our modern wits, it is the story of a young wife's passionate and devoted love for her mother-in-law. Ruth's tender, self-sacrificing love for Naomi is the very charm of the story."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. The Great Decision

Thy God Shall be My God. As these three lonely widows stand on that country road, Ruth feels she has come to one of the great decisive points of life. She is "Diana at the Crossways." Behind her, in the sweet light of reminiscence, is Moab, the home of her childhood, her mother and her father; the scene of her friendships, the centre of her interests. Before her lies Israel with its dark, forbidding hills, its alien faces, its unknown trials. What calls her thither? To outward seeming, little. Ease, pleasure, even common prudence, as Naomi points out, bid her return to that land where love and hope are waiting for one so winning.

Yes, but she "hears a voice we cannot hear." It is the voice of duty, of compassion, of faith, of love. This calls her on, and will not let her go. That desolate widow strikes her heart with a high heroic note. Nor that only. It is no mere Naomi she sees standing before her in piteous farewell. It is her dead husband's mother. Nay, more, it is her dead husband's faith, her dead husband's Jehovah. Can she go forward to make these her own? She can, and even now she will. And the depth of her heroic resolve is measured by the high, impassioned language in which that resolve finds expression. Nowhere, it has been truly said, in the whole of the Old Testament, are there words more beautiful in their simple pathos or more eloquent in their unconscious poetry. *W. Mackintosh Mackay,* in *The Woman of Tact.*

They Who Never Made the Great Decision. In Dante's great poem, the neutrals, those who in this world have never taken a side, occupy the mouth and vestibule of hell. There they swirl unceasingly in clouds of red sand, their faces bitten by wasps and hornets. They pursue in a blind, fatal way a flag which never stays for a moment in one place. Dante denies them the moral dignity of a place even in hell itself. "Heaven will not have them, and the deep hell received them not lest the wicked there should have some glory over them"—lest the wicked, that is, looking at these neutrals, should be able to feel that there were souls worse than themselves.

And what was the sin of these neutrals? Oh, simply this: they had never taken a side. They had spent God's precious moment, which is our life, they had spent it watching which way the wind was likely to blow. In this present world, the very purpose of which is that our soul may acquire some masterbent, some moral habit and disposition in obedience to which one may face life and death, in this present world, these had committeed themselves to nothing. They had spent their days in dodging reality, in defending their own mean comfort. They had been neither for one side nor the other, but only for themselves. They had lived without blame and without praise.

Vergil, who in the poem is Dante's guide through hell, who represents the natural honor and chastity of the human soul, all that is best in man short of that grace of God which came to man with Christ—Vergil, the high-minded pagan, is even more contemptuous of those neutrals: "Let us not speak of them," says he, "Let us give them one look and pass on." *Condensed* from *At Close Quarters* by *John A. Hutton.*

Till My God Is Their God. Mary Swail Taft, writing of life in India, has this to say about "the greatest sight in all India." It was not Mount Everest, or the Taj Mahal. It was a lone American woman physician, daughter of a university professor, living alone in one of India's sacred cities. In Brindaban, on the Jumna, thronging with garlanded sacred cows, chattering sacred monkeys, vile priests, temple women to the number of eight thousand—a haunting nightmare of a city—she was carrying on her work. We had taken tiffin with her. Never can I forget that good-bye as she stood on the veranda of her bungalow. It seemed so impossible to leave her there, lily-faced, lily-souled, in that cesspool of iniquity, with not a single one of her own race. She answered the unspoken thought: "But these people are my people." Her life was a vow. With another she had said, "These people shall be my people till my God is their God." So the people call her a *Sadhu*—a holy one—and when she lay sick unto death they hovered about the door, saying, "I will not speak, only let me see her."

II. A Steadfast Mind

Ruth's Steadfast Mind. Ruth and Orpah both loved Naomi. Neither could bear to see the older woman return alone, uncared for, to her native land. Both went with her a short distance on her way. Orpah as well as Ruth said once, "Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." But when Naomi besought them to return each to her own home, and spoke words of practical wisdom—for undoubtedly, as far as each girl could see, she herself would be better off in her own land and among her own kindred—Orpah yielded and returned. One may believe that she had purposed returning with Naomi, but she lacked a decided will, she was easily dissuaded from her purpose. Possibly she was like Queen Anne of whom Victor Hugo said that, "No quality in her attained to virtue and none to vice—there was in her so much that was indecisive." Said Vergil, "An ever-varying and changeable thing is woman."

Ruth had a steadfast mind. Having made her decision, it was irrevocable. No wonder Naomi saw this and ceased entreating her to give up her resolute purpose, when she heard Ruth's ringing, resolute, determined words. "The *steadfast mind* is the issue of a *decided will;* the steadfast mind is a mind that *will not be dissuaded;* the steadfast mind is instantly and steadily *ready to act* along the line of its decision."

Some one has rightly said that we cannot imagine Ruth in after years, even though her lot had remained that of the poor gleaner and laborer, returning upon her decision and weeping in secret because she thought she had made a foolish choice. Her mind is too clear and firm for such repentance. Her resolve had been taken, not weakly, nor wilfully, but deliberately and thoughtfully; and being capable of clear resolve, she was capable also of steadfast constancy to her resolution.

When to Stop Thinking. President Jackson once counseled: "Always take all the time to reflect that circumstances will permit, but when the time for action has come, stop thinking!" It seems to me that, in many cases, is a most valuable suggestion. A leader of men said of another man of whom the company were speaking, "Mr. ——— is never so undecided as he is after he has made up his mind." That gentleman, you see, did not or could not "stop thinking." All sorts of after considerations and questionings began to haunt, menace, prevent him.

Apply this "stop thinking" in two or three directions. Here is a young person who believes himself to have become a Christian. As far as he knows himself, he has definitely accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. Of course, the matter of publicly confessing Christ presents itself. Certainly about so real and grave a duty there ought to be most earnest and prayerful thought. The young Christian has thus thought; has come to the decision to range himself publicly with those who own his Lord. But now his trouble is that he does not "stop thinking," and—do it. He begins to ask himself, "Shall I be able to hold out?" "What will such and such a one say of me?" "Would not some future time be more propitious than the present?"—and so on endlessly. His action halts. His fine enthusiasm cools. The consciousness of an undone duty depresses. As the days go, the duty seems more jagged. The joy of the Christian life evaporates. Ten to one, worldliness and religious carelessness smother his religious purpose and feeling with their piling sands. How many I have known who put themselves in this plight of not stopping thinking! *Dr. Wayland Hoyt.*

III. Christian Winsomeness

Naomi the Winsome. Ruth is the chief heroine of the Book, but Naomi is no less a heroine. Personal names meant something in those days, and Naomi means Pleasant, Winsome. "Call me not Naomi, Pleasant; call me Mara, Bitter," she said to her townspeople on her return to Bethlehem, for her joys had fled, her hopes were buried in those graves in the land of Moab. But her mourning was not selfish. "It grieveth me much for your sakes," she told her daughters. With all her trials and sorrows Naomi must have remained sweet and lovable, for Ruth loved her and would not part from her, and was so attracted by the religion which she had seen in her that she, too,

would follow Jehovah her God. Winsomeness created love, and human love led to divine love. It is still the way by which the knowledge and love of God comes to most hearts.

Making Religion Attractive. Two young men, who had come from very different homes and out of very different surroundings, met in a city boarding-house. They became roommates and fast friends. One was an undisciplined boy, in no way vicious, but without definite principles or convictions. The other was a strong, earnest fellow who had been brought up in a small village, and had been an active worker in the home church. The two had no difficulty in finding which of them was the natural leader. They formed the same habits of life; they attended the same church; they gradually assumed definite responsibilities; and both developed into strong, useful manhood.

Looking back over his life in those days, he who had been the undisciplined boy, said: "I cannot think of any greater blessing that could have befallen me than the friendship of this young man, who had so much in common with me, but who had, too, so much that I lacked. He did for me what no teacher or pastor or employer could have done, and he did it with perfect naturalness, and, indeed, unconsciously!

"What was the secret of his influence over you?" asked a friend. "He made his religion so wholesomely attractive," was the reply.

Religion is sometimes made most unattractive by those who profess it. Men are even repelled from the church because some who call themselves Christians are unworthy. Attractiveness is not the sole or even the chief virtue in religion, but we may be sure that people will not permanently choose to embrace it unless it has that grace. Blessed are those people who are not only good, but whose goodness is human enough and cheerful enough to attract others. *Youth's Companion.*

The Soul's Atmosphere. Had we tests fine enough we would doubtless find each man's personality the centre of outreaching influences. He himself may be utterly unconscious of this exhalation of moral forces, as he is of the contagion of disease from his body. But if light is in him he shines; if darkness rules he shades; if his heart glows with love he warms; if frozen with selfishness he chills; if corrupt he poisons; if pure-hearted he cleanses. We watch with wonder the apparent flight of the sun through space, glowing upon dead planets, shortening winter and bringing summer, with birds, leaves and fruits. But that is not half so wonderful as the passage of a human heart, glowing and sparkling with ten thousand effects, as it moves through life. The soul, like the sun, has its atmosphere, and is over against its fellows for light, warmth and transformation.

Gentle as is the atmosphere about us, it presses with a weight of fourteen pounds to the square inch. No infant's hand feels its weight; no leaf of aspen or wing of bird detects this heavy pressure, for the fluid air presses equally in all directions. Just so gentle, yet powerful, is the moral atmosphere of a good man as it presses upon and shapes his kind. He who hath made man in his own image hath endowed him with this forceful presence.

The supreme example of atmosphere and influence is Jesus Christ. His was a force mightier than intellect. Wherever he moved a light ne'er seen on land nor sea shone on man. It was more than eminent beauty or supreme genius. His scepter was not through cunning of brain or craft of hand; reality was his throne. His gift cannot be bought nor commanded; but his secret and charm may be ours. Acceptance, obedience, companionship with him—these are the keys of power. *Condensed* from *The Investment of Influence* by *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis.*

A Winsome Man. One of the Japanese delegates to the World's Sunday School Association at Zurich was Mr. Hiromichi Kazaki. He is a member of the "Kumamoto Band": another member is Mr. Harada, the President of the New Christian University at Doshisha; several others were the first ministers of Congregational churches in Japan. It was 39 years ago—at a time when it was a harder thing for a Japanese to decide to leave his gods and serve the One True God than it was for the Moabitess Ruth—that forty young Japanese students at an English school met early one morning on a hilltop and solemnly covenanted with God and with one another that henceforth they would devote their lives to the service of the Kumamoto Band.

What led these young men to make this great decision? Mr. Kozaki says it was because of the influence of one of their teachers, Captain Janes. Captain Janes was not a minister or a missionary; his work with his pupils was not supposed to have any religious purpose, but so powerful was his Christianity that his pupils made the great choice that his God should be their God.

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US.

Our Prayer. Where thou goest, my blessed Lord, thither I will go, though it be to Calvary. Where thou lodgest, though thou hast nowhere to lay thy head, there will I lodge. Thy cross shall be my cross; thy grave my grave; thy risen life, mine. Death shall only be the means of uniting me more closely to thee, my Alpha and Omega, my First and Last. *Rev. F. B. Meyer,* in *Record of Christian Work.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

I. The Book of Ruth. See pp. 28, 29 of this *Guide.*
II. Ruth the Decided. See chapter with this heading in Matheson's "Representative Women of the Bible."
III. Widows. See "Widows' Families: Pensioned and Otherwise," *The Survey,* June 6, 1914; The Problem of the Widow Salvini, *Outlook,* Feb. 22, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What did Hannah promise to do if she were given a son? (1 S. 1.9-11.) 2. How was the promise fulfilled? (1 S. 1.24-28.) 3. How often did his parents visit Samuel, and what present did his mother bring? (1 S. 2.18, 19.) 4. What does 1 S. 2.26 say about Samuel? 5. How does the Gospel of Luke say that the Child Jesus grew? (Lk. 2.52.) 6. What does the 15th verse tell us was one of Samuel's duties at this time? 7. How long was the light kept burning in the Tabernacle, according to Ex. 27.20, 21? 8. Then what time was it that Samuel heard the call?

Questions to Think About. 1. What does the last sentence of verse 1 mean? 2. What is the meaning of "wax" in verse 2? 3. Why is the Tabernacle called the temple of God? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 110.) 4. What does verse 7 mean? (Guide, ¶ 2, p. 115.) 5. There is a proverbial expression in verse 11: what does it mean? 6. Do you approve of Eli's words in verse 18? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 111.) 7. What does the last clause of verse 19 mean? (*Guide,* p. 111.) 8. For what did the expression "From Dan to Beersheba" stand? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 112.) 9. Do you think it required courage on the part of the boy Samuel to tell Eli the next morning the message that had come to him? 10. What qualities did the boy Samuel possess which you admire? 11. Did God's call come to Paul as it did to Samuel? 12. Does his call come to every one in the same way? 13. Are you willing to obey the call when it does come? 14. Has a call not come to you? 15. Has God some work for every one who is born into the world? 16. To what service are you called? 17. How was Dr. Grenfell called to Labrador? 18. How did God's call come to James Chalmers, William Duncan, Hudson Taylor, or any missionary about whom you know?

Memory and Note-Book Work. I. Commit to memory Julia Ward Howe's poem upon Lincoln, which tells of God's call to him, p. 115 of this *Guide.* Devote a Note-Book to the Biography of Ruth, telling her story in four scenes: I. Naomi in a Foreign Land. II. The Return of Ruth with Naomi. III. Ruth in the Field of Boaz. IV. Ruth's Marriage. Add a portrayal of Ruth as given by Naomi; of Naomi, as given by Ruth; of Orpah, as shown in a dialogue between Ruth and Naomi; of Boaz, as given by Ruth; of Ruth, as given by Boaz. Illustrate your book with many pictures.

Questions upon the Book of Ruth. 1. Why is the Book called Ruth rather than Naomi or Boaz? 2. Who wrote the Book? 3. What reasons have we for knowing that it was written long after the events recorded? 4. Why do many think that it was written in the time of Ezra? 5. When does the Book say that the events took place? 6. Tell the story of the Book. 7. Write an outline of the Book. 8. Repeat Ruth's words of devotion to Naomi. 9. What have others said about it as literature? 10. What are its lessons?

LESSON VII—FEBRUARY 14

SAMUEL CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

Golden Text

Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. I Samuel 3:9.

LESSON I Samuel 1.24-28, chapter 3: verses 3.1-13, 19, 20 printed MEMORIZE verses 3.8, 9

And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), 3 and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to *sleep*, in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was; 4 that Jehovah called Samuel: and he said, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6 And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8 And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not.

19 And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The child Samuel.* Samuel means *Asked of God:* read the first two chapters. The Hebrew word translated "child" is applied in the Bible to an infant and also to a man of forty. Josephus says that he had just completed his twelfth year when the word of the Lord came to him. If so, then he was the age that Christ was when, taken to the Temple, he dedicated himself to his Lord's business.—*Ministered unto Jehovah before Eli.* He helped Eli in the service of the temple, and seems to have been the aged Eli's special attendant. One of his duties was the opening of the house of God every morning, verse 15.—*Precious.* Or, *rare,* RVm. There are only two prophets mentioned in the whole book of Judges, 4.4 and 6.8.—*Frequent.* Hebrew, *widely spread,* RVm.

2. *It came to pass at that time.* The remainder of this verse and the third verse are parenthetical, verse 4 being the conclusion of this first statement of verse 2.—*Wax.* Become.

3. *The lamp of God was not yet gone out.* The sacred lamp was filled with olive oil and kept burning from evening to morning, Ex. 27.20, 21; the time was therefore early dawn.—*In the temple of Jehovah.* The Hebrew word translated *temple* means dwelling-place: it is translated palace when it refers to the dwelling-place of an earthly ruler. The "dwelling-place of Jehovah" was at this time the Tabernacle.—*Where the ark of God was.* Grammatically this clause may refer to the verb "was laid down" or to the noun "temple": if the former is correct, Samuel was sleeping in the Sanctuary itself; if the latter (which is the more probable) he slept in an apartment or tent near by

THE DEDICATION OF SAMUEL

From a Painting by F. W. Topham

which was reserved for the use of priests and Levites. We know that in the wilderness Moses and Aaron slept in front of the Tabernacle.

4. *God called Samuel.* God made himself known to Samuel.—*Here am I.* Compare Gen. 22.1; Is. 6.8. "God often calls us, but generally we are not at home" (*Abbé Roux*).

7. *Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah.* He "knew" him as all devout Israelites did, but he had as yet received no direct revelation of the Divine Spirit. See ¶ 2, p. 115.

9. "Though Eli knew that the seals of sacred office were being taken from himself that they might be placed in those youthful hands, yet, without a trace of hurt pride, he took the boy's hand and led him into the Divine Presence This is our greatest office, to put every soul into direct telephonic communication with the secret place of the Most High" (*Meyer*).

10. *And Jehovah came and stood.* The Voice became to Samuel the Vision; see verse 15.

11-13. *I will do a thing in Israel.* The next chapter tells of the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the capture of the ark, and the death of Eli's sons and of Eli himself.—*At which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.* A proverbial expression which means that it shall create great astonishment or alarm.—*In that day.* The preliminary judgment on the wicked sons followed swiftly, but that on Eli's house came some twenty or thirty years later.—*All that I have spoken concerning his house.* Read 2.27-36.—*Judge.* Punish.—*For the iniquity which he knew.* Eli was not ignorant of his son's wickedness. The iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children, but so, also, are the iniquities of the children visited upon the fathers who neglect their duty to their children. For the guilt of Eli see the Third Topic of the next lesson.

17-18. *God do so to thee, and more also.* See ¶ 6, p. 102.—*Every whit.* Everything.—*Let him do what seemeth him good.* Eli was a good man, submissive to God's will, but he was a thoroughly weak man, and his words here show more the vice of weakness than the virtue of pious resignation. He would have fulfilled God's will better had he prayed for mercy and then taken his sons severely in hand.—*And Samuel told him.* "God calls us to duty, and the only right answer is obedience" (*Hodges*).

19-20. *And Samuel grew and Jehovah was with him.* Compare the words said in Luke 2.52 about the Child Jesus, And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.—*Did let none of his words fall to the ground.* His words were all true, for, as Matthew Henry says, when God calls he qualifies; when he qualifies, he calls.—*A prophet of Jehovah.* One who *speaks forth* for Jehovah.—*From Dan even to Beersheba.* An expression often used for "from one end of the land to the other," "throughout all Canaan."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1.11. *And she* (Hannah) *vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou . . . wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life.* A writer says that the modern Bagdad Jewess, if childless, embraces the big cannon before the governor's palace. "O great gun, mighty gun, I wish a child, and if you will grant my wish, I will make you a present when I untie this string." Thus praying, she binds a little faded rag about the cannon. When her child is born she takes into the house a pig to guard it from all harm.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. About what boy have we heard who was "a child of prayer," given to his mother in answer to prayer? In what lessons have we been told that God spoke to some one? In an earlier lesson whom did God call for a special service, and what was the service? How does God speak? Who said "God do so to me and more also," and what did she mean by this?

Israel under Eli. When first we hear of Eli he is already an old man. For a long time he had been both priest and judge, but he had ruled with a weak hand, and apparently, at the time of our lesson, his two prodigal sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were acting as priests. Politically and morally, the nation was

far from prosperous. Deborah and Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah had repulsed the Midianites and Ammonites from the east, and quieted the Cannanite tribes on the north; Samson had made fitful efforts to break the power which the Philistines from the southwest had gained over the Israelites, but they were too powerful an enemy to be thus vanquished, and their invasions continued. Eli, though pious and well-meaning, was fatally weak. He had no power over the atrocious doings of his sons, nor the moral decay of Israel.

The times were out of joint and a wise head and strong arm were needed to set them right. These qualifications Samuel possessed and God called him to be the last and greatest of the judges, the first of the prophets and the connecting link between the period of the Judges and that of the Monarchy.

The Child Samuel Dedicated to God. As Eli was seated one day before the Tabernacle he saw a woman prostrate herself and move her lips without uttering a sound, and he jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. It was Hannah praying for a son and promising to give him unto the Lord; her prayer was heard and when the child was born she named him Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah. She fulfilled her vow by bringing him to Shiloh and leaving him there with Eli, the high priest, and thereafter she visited him only once a year, and then she brought him a little robe. The child grew and increased in favor with Jehovah, and also with men.

The Books of Samuel. See pp. 31, 32 of this *Guide*.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Samuel was born at Ramah, in Samaria, and it was a journey of twelve miles to Shiloh, the religious capitol of Israel, where he was educated. Shiloh lies east of the central highway which travelers cross in going from Samaria to Galilee. Ruins now crown the summit of the rounded, rocky hill which stands out on the plain, encircled by deep valleys save on the south. The Mohammedans claim that the mosque which one sees from afar occupies the site of the Tabernacle, but back of the hill a leveled place cut in the rock where there is also the semblance of an altar may have been the spot where the Tabernacle rested when Samuel served in the sanctuary.

Dan was the northern frontier town. Its earlier name was Laish and it belonged to the Phœnicians until 600 of the tribe of Dan took possessions of it, as told in the Book of Judges. Beersheba is 27 miles south of Hebron on the great highway between Canaan and Egypt. Proverbially it was the southwest frontier town, but several towns of the tribe of Simeon lay farther south. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob each spent some years at Beersheba. Wells dug in Abraham's day are still to be found here.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

What a bugle call for child-study is this! We see here the relationship between the child and his teacher, and between the child and God. The parents laid the foundation of Samuel's religious training, and Eli the teacher continued it. Eli's part shows that he knew the child and he knew God. He led the child to a knowledge of God. What knowledge of a child does the Sunday-school teacher need?

Read carefully these words condensed from an article by Mr. W. Charles Piggott in the *Sunday School Chronicle*:—Samuel was open and responsive to the spiritual world, but he did not understand either it or himself. The hour might have passed, the whisper of the Divine voice have gone unheeded, and shades of the prison house closed about the growing boy, had there not been at his side a man of experience, a wise master. "Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child." He was able to interpret the mystery of this young soul and to direct its response. So stands declared the highest and the most delicate part of our task in our contact with children. We are *teachers* in the ordinary sense of the word; we have a definite body of instruction to impart to them. To make them acquainted with the Bible, to give them an intelligent interest in it, a love for it, a sense of its value as a road book in the pilgrimage of life, is no small undertaking. We are *educators* in the more exact sense; we have to help in the unfolding of the

child's own life, in the development and use of its powers, in the formation of its character and moral habits. But beyond this we are to be *interpreters* of the opening spiritual life of the child. God's approach to the child is not limited to our ministries, whether as parents or teachers.

Ever in the shadow of the child's life, in its wonder and delight, in its joy and fear, in the deep things that sometimes rise from its heart, stands God ever calling. It is our part to interpret the hour and the method of the Divine approach, and this aspect of our task demands more of us than any other. There is no text-book for this. Herein we are cast back upon the wealth of our own experience. We are often accustomed to say that in the last issue it is personality that tells in our work. That is true, but it means more than we vaguely convey by the word personality, more than the indefinable charm and attraction of manners. What finally counts is the wealth of personal religion, the individuality of experience by which the treasures of the spiritual life have been made our own. The things which are spiritually discerned can only be seen by those who can compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must know the Bible, we must know something of psychology and pedagogy in order to help the child, but to understand the deepest nature of the child we must know God.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

You have a lesson today that children always love to hear. Tell the whole story, beginning with the mother who prayed for a little baby; and when you speak of her Song of Thanksgiving let the one to whom you gave a copy last week recite this verse (or teach it to all):

"There are blessings from God all about us,
We should thank him for gifts great and small,
But the gift of a dear little baby
Needs the very best 'Thank you' of all."

If you need any help in telling this beautiful story, see "One Hundred Bible Stories" by Robert Bird, pp. 104-111; 114-116. Show Sir Joshua Reynolds's picture of Samuel, Wilde No. 417, and Opie's picture of Samuel Presented to Eli, Wilde No. 471, or Tissot's "Eli Sendeth Out Samuel," No. 232.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. *China's Millions* tells of a Christian Chinese mother to whom a little boy was born. When the missionary called to see the babe the first words the mother said were: "Will you pray that he may become a Samuel? I want him to be the Lord's from his birth." What did she mean? As you talk about Samuel's dedication show your pupils this reproduction of a photograph of a Tibetan mother with her four sons who have all been dedicated to the priesthood.

When the missionary visited Wenchow where that Chinese mother lives her boy was fourteen years old. The mother asked the missionary if she had remembered her wish that he might be like Samuel, and said: "We have never gone back on that; we earnestly pray that he may be wholly the Lord's and serve him, that he may learn some trade whereby he can earn his own living, and yet have time enough to preach."

A Tibetan Mother with her Sons, who have all been Dedicated to the Priesthood

For Older Pupils. When Savonarola was a lad he was in the habit of spending many an afternoon strolling along the River Po with his grandfather. Once after a long silence the

lad said to his grandfather, "There are voices calling me." "Yes, I believe it," said his grandfather; "you must listen for the Voice." This thought that he was destined for some special task never left him, and his constant prayer was, "Lord, teach me the way my soul should walk!" "I have listened to the Voice" was his message at eighteen to his friends. And later when he was ordered by the Pope to cease preaching he answered, "I must preach, because God has called me thereto." Do you think God's Voice spoke to the boy Samuel and did not speak to the boy Savonarola? Do you think Samuel was called to be a prophet and Savonarola was not called to preach and purify the Church from its iniquities? Do you think that God called those two men to his service and does not call you to some service for him? The incidents of Samuel's call are very familiar: let us briefly recall them.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Listening to God

The Great Assumption in the Bible. The Bible throughout builds upon one great assumption. It takes for granted that God does actually speak to men. The Gospel postulates the reality of the Divine communication. It is not we who grope after God and find him by our searching; it is God who discovers himself to us, and finds us, and lays hold on us. There is an awful simplicity and directness about the Divine message. God calleth his own by name. His voice singles a man out from the crowd and isolates him from all other souls in the world. It makes a desert round him in the midst of the market-place, and brings him alone, face to face, with his Maker. And again, God's appeal is not only real and simple and personal; it is also reiterated. The Lord's entreating is like his forgiving—until seventy times seven. When we pray to him, he bids us use no vain repetitions. But in his words to us it seems sometimes as though God did seek to be heard for his much speaking. God speaketh once, yea twice—though man regardeth it not. *The Bible in the World.*

Some One is Trying to Tell Something. Some years ago, in New England, there was, as we all know, a young girl named Laura Bridgman. She had been blind and deaf and dumb from her second year. Her only contact with the world was through her sense of touch, and even that sense had not been cultivated. When she was eight years old, Dr. S. G. Howe, one of the greatest of American philanthopists, became interested in her pitiful condition, and sought to help her.

He began by putting her hand to his lips and reading aloud to her for a quarter of an hour. This he did at the same time every day. Then about the tenth day he omitted the reading, and watched to see if she noticed the omission. Week after week passed, but she gave no sign.

Finally, one day when the usual hour had come for the reading and he did not begin, she gave unmistakable signs of annoyance. That marked the first great step. Soon, he tells us, her advance was rapid. In time, Laura Bridgman, through Doctor Howe's efforts, became an educated and intelligent woman, alive to all the throbbing life of the great world.

When we read this remarkable history, the tremendous significance of one particular moment in her development must impress us. It was a mighty moment when the conviction seized her: "Some one is trying to tell me something!" Ever afterward her great purpose in life must have been to learn what that some one had to tell her.

Many with more advantages at birth, have gone through a similar experience. They have looked on the world, on its joys and its sorrows, its blessings and its tragedies; and found it all meaningless. Then one day it has flashed across them: "There's a meaning in these things! Some One is trying to tell me, and make me understand!"

Then there remains for such a one, as for Laura Bridgman, just one thing—to try to learn what that Some One would say. *Youth's Companion.*

A True Story. A great storm was raging overhead, lightning flashed in the somber sky. Round the everlasting hills encircling us reverberated the thunder. It was a beautiful but awe-inspiring scene. In the midst of the storm a little girl asked, "What is the thunder, mammy?" "I think it is God's

voice," was the mother's answer. A terrific clap followed, and the child was seen to bow her head. The mother called her to her side, "Why do you bow your head when the thunder comes?" she asked in her elderly blind ignorance. "I'm answering God," was the reply, given with a crimson flush, flooding from brow to chin. "And what do you say, darling?" "I say what Samuel said," the child replied: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." *The Quiver.*

II. The Religion of Youth

As seen in Samuel. Hannah dedicated her babe to God's service. So parents today dedicate their children to God when they have them baptized. As soon as Samuel was old enough to be taken away from home, his father and mother took him to Shiloh and left him there to be educated as a prophet of God. Once a year only they went to see him, for they had given him to God's service and they would not claim him oftener. For several years there was no conscious self-dedication to God on the part of Samuel. Unquestioningly he aided Eli, he helped in the temple service, and he learned about God. Up to a certain time his mind was merely receptive. Then came a day when he began to ask himself questions. What did it all mean? Who is God? Could he ever know God for himself? "Shall I take the faith in which I have been trained, and put it within my heart, and from now on let it be my very life?" Then it was that he heard God's voice speaking to his soul. At first he thought it was a human voice—that of his aged teacher—and then he knew that it was the Divine Voice, that God himself was speaking to him. This was Samuel's conscious self-dedication to God and God's service.

Three Periods of Special Opportunity for Teachers. There are three periods when young lives are particularly susceptible to the movements of the Divine Spirit. The ages of nine to twelve, fourteen and fifteen, seventeen and eighteen are especially open to impression, and need to be carefully watched by the devout and earnest teacher. In some cases, especially where children have been brought under Christian influences, the Love of God may have stolen over the inner hemisphere as the dawn over the summer heavens; but where there has been no clear evidence of decision for Christ it becomes a teacher to be watchfully on the alert at any of the periods mentioned, for an opportunity of unfolding and enforcing the claims of Christ, and challenging an immediate verdict and decision of the soul. *F. B. Meyer.*

The Life of God in the Soul of a Child. "I do not remember the time when I did not pray, when I did not think of myself as a child of God," said a great preacher one day; "but there came a time when I deliberately ratified and confirmed my parents' choice of a Christian life for me. I cannot call that my conversion, for conversion implies a change; call it rather my confession."

III. Called for Service

Lincoln's Call. Samuel was called to be a prophet. Two days ago we celebrated the birth of one of the noblest and best-beloved of our countrymen, Abraham Lincoln. Like Samuel, Lincoln was called by God for a special service. What was it? At the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of his birth (Feb. 12, 1909), Mrs. Julia Ward Howe told about his call in this poem which she had written:

Through the dim pageant of the years
A wondrous tracery appears;
A cabin of the western wild
Shelters in sleep a new-born child.
Nor nurse, nor parent dear can know
The way those infant feet must go;
And yet a nation's help and hope
Are sealed within that horoscope.
Beyond is toil for daily bread,
And thought, to noble issues led,
And courage, arming for the morn
For whose behest this man was born.

A man of homely, rustic ways,
Yet he achieves the forum's praise,
And soon earth's highest meed has won,
The seat and sway of Washington.
No throne of honors and delights;
Distrustful days and sleepless nights,
To struggle, suffer and aspire,
Like Israel, led by cloud of fire.
A treacherous shot, a sob of rest,
A martyr's palm upon his breast,
A welcome from the glorious seat
Where blameless souls of heroes meet;
And, thrilling through unmeasured days,
A song of gratitude and praise;
A cry that all the earth shall heed,
To God, who gave him for our need.

God called Lincoln for our need. Lincoln himself always believed that he could hear God's voice calling him and telling him what to do. "One rainy night I could not sleep", he told his physician. "The wounds of the soldiers and sailors disturbed me; their pains pierced my heart, and I asked God to show me how they could have better relief. After wrestling some time in prayer, he put the plans of the Sanitary Commission in my mind, and they have been carried out pretty much as God gave them to me that night. Doctor, thank your kind heavenly Father, and not me, for the Sanitary Commission."

To a Class of Young Women. You believe in Christ. You have said to him in a vague and yet not unmeaning way,

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee,"

and yet nothing has seemed to happen. You have had no call to service. You have heard of other girls who have been called to the mission field. But you have had no call. You have known other girls whose consecration has led them into a life of definite activity and toil for Christ. But yet he does not seem to have taken possession of that which you offered. And you have perhaps come to the conclusion that Christ has not taken you at your word. It seems to have meant nothing to him, and certainly it has meant little to your own life—this profession of your faith in him.

If you are feeling like that, if you have no consciousness of Christ's nearness and no assurance of his possession of you, let me say just this word to you. Hold fast to that promise you have made to Christ. Never take back what you have offered to him. The possible influence of any surrendered life is always positively incalculable. For he will take the common things that you have, if they are given as your best, and he will multiply their use beyond anything you have thought possible. He will take this life of yours and make it his palace. He will speak to others through your lips the words of eternal life. He will take your capacities, your talents and your powers and will use them all in his service to bring blessing to other lives. Oh, think of it! Your brain to think his thoughts after him; your hands to carry out his behests and to distribute his abundance to poverty-stricken lives. All the powers of your redeemed and consecrated womanhood shall henceforth manifest him in ways that shall attest his reality to those in your own circle who otherwise would miss him. What an honor for you! And what an incomparably richer and worthier life than one which is merely lived for social pleasure and worldly joy. *Condensed* from *The Life of Fuller Purpose* by *J. Stuart Holden.*

Called to be a Missionary. "A missionary was describing most vividly the condition of the cannibals in New Zealand. One little girl, sitting well toward the front of the audience was completely absorbed in the thrilling story. Her eyes were wide, and her face shone with appreciation or contorted with childish sympathy as the missionary went on to tell of the great need of these poor souls for the influence of Christianity. The lit-

tle auditor was Clementina Rowe, who afterwards became Mrs. William Butler.

"That was more than eighty years ago. And now 'Mother Butler,' at the age of ninety-three, has passed on. She left foreign mission fields unexcelled by any other woman."

God's call came to Hudson Taylor at the age of seventeen. Read the wonderful account of his dedication of himself to God, and of God's answer summed up in the words, "Then go for me to China", told in Chapter Six of his Biography.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US.

Those who have been led to feel, in some solemn hour, that the Hand of God has shaped their past, and the voice of God is calling them, may go forward with quiet and resolute hearts to the work that is theirs to do, strong in the assurance that the God who called them will also sustain them. *Professor J. C. McFadyen.*

Our Prayer: Heavenly Father, we know that as thou didst speak to Samuel of old, so thou art speaking to us day by day. Thou speakest to us within, in the temple of our hearts. O may our hearts be attuned to hear thee, even as a mother's heart is attuned to the voice of her babe, for her ear, though deaf to all other sounds at night, yet catches its faintest cry. Help us to listen for thy voice, for the message which thou hast for each one of us, for the call to the duty to which thou dost summon us. Make us thy willing messengers. For Christ's sake we ask this, who hast said that as the Father hath sent him, even so sends he us.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The mother's part in the child's moral and religious education. (Consider Eli's case and the father's part next week.)

2. May a parent rightfully relegate to Church or Sunday-school his responsibility for the spiritual welfare of his child? "Is any parent in a right state of mind regarding his children when he can hand over the care of their supreme interests to the efforts of another, who has many more to care for, and to whom his child can be but one of a company? The love for the child ought to be deeper than that. Where religious life is sound it will be deeper. We need to look at our own responsibilities." *Methodist Recorder.* See *The Outlook,* July 9, 1910.

3. How early can children be led to God? See *The Outlook,* p. 557, July 12, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What two warnings of Eli are recorded? (I S. 2.27-36; and last lesson.) 2. Read verses 21 and 22: what great statesman was called Ichabod by Longfellow and why? 3. Describe the ark. (Ex. 25.10-22). 4. What became of the ark? (*Guide,* p. 120.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What was the thought of the elders when they asked their question of verse 3? (*Guide,* p. 118.) 2. Why did the elders think the presence of the ark in battle would save the day? (*Guide,* p. 120.) 3. Why are two sons of Eli especially mentioned in connection with the ark? (*Guide,* p. 119.) 4. What connection has the Golden Text with the lesson? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 123.) 5. What is wrong about the statement of the Philistines as recorded in verse 8? (*Guide,* p. 119.) 6. How can you explain the wickedness of the sons of so good a man as Eli? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 119.) 7. What two patriarchs were culpable in their training of their sons? 8. What do you think of Eli as a priest? 9. As a teacher? 10. As a patriot? 11. As a parent?

Note-Book Work. In your Biographical Book write Part I of the Life of Samuel, How God Revealed Himself to Samuel. Add a characterization of the Boy Samuel by Eli. Or, write A Comparison of Hannah's Giving her Son Samuel to God and Abraham's Giving his Son Isaac to God. Younger children may write about "A Little Helper."

LESSON VIII—FEBRUARY 21

THE DEATH OF ELI AND HIS SONS

Golden Text

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. James 1.22

LESSON I Samuel 4.1-18; verses 1-13, 18 printed MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and encamped beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. 2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. 3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh unto us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the hand of our enemies. 4 So the people sent to Shiloh; and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who sitteth *above* the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. 6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of Jehovah was come into the camp. 7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. 8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness. 9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. 10 And the Philistines fought and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. 11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. 13 And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that *Eli* fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1-2. *The Philistines.* Recall ¶ 9, p. 94.—*Ebenezer.* The word means "stone of help", a name which later Samuel gave to the place where he set up stones, saying, "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us", 1 S. 7.12.—*They joined battle.* Or, *the battle was spread,* RVm.—*Smitten.* Overcome, put to rout.—*Army.* Hebrew, *array,* RVm.

3. *Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us today before the Philistines?* "If they meant this as an inquiry into the cause of God's displeasure, they needed not go far to find out. It was plain enough; Israel had sinned, though they were not willing to see it and own it. But it rather seems that they expostulated boldly with God about it, and disputed the matter with him. 'Wherefore shall we, that are Israelites, be smitten before the Philistines? How absurd and unjust it is!' " (*Matthew Henry.*) *The ark of the covenant.* The ark contained the tables of the law and was the symbol of the presence of God himself, and the proof of his promises. Read Ex. 25, 10-22.—*That it may save us.* Note the *it*: their trust is in the Ark, not in the God of the Ark. They may have recalled the

taking of the ark about the walls of Jericho, or they may have thought that God could not let the ark be captured and therefore he would have to let them win the battle.

4. *Sitteth.* Or, *is enthroned,* RVm.—*Above the cherubim.* "This does not imply that there were figures of cherubim upon the ark (1 K. 8. 6), but refers to the general glory of Jehovah. The cherubim are heavenly beings regarded as standing in Jehovah's presence (compare the seraphim of Isa. 6), and, in Ezek. 1.10, as of composite form. Compare also Ps. 18.10. In Solomon's temple two winged cherubim stood in the most Holy Place (1 K. 6.24)." (*One Volume Commentary*).—*The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark.* The thought is that their presence prevented the expected effect, verse 3. Recall last week's lesson in which retribution is prophesied because of the wickedness of these two sons, and the words of Moses to Korah: Hear now, ye sons of Levi; seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

8. *Plagues.* Hebrew, *smiting,* RVm.—*These are the gods that smote the Egyptians in the wilderness.* "They were as much out in their history as in their divinity", remarks Matthew Henry. The reference is to the plagues that the Egyptians suffered in their own land when they refused to allow the Hebrews under Moses to leave Egypt. However, "in the wilderness" is thought by some scholars to be an erroneous reading; a slight alteration in the Hebrew would give "and with pestilence."

10. *And Israel was smitten.* The presence of the ark with all its sacred associations, did not save from defeat the faithless people, who did not worship the God of the Ark. So "to the Roman Catholic the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is powerful, whether he come to it in the right spirit or not. But the Protestant view is quite different. It holds that the grace in the Sacrament is conferred only upon those who come in the true attitude of penitence and faith."

11. *And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.* Eli, who failed to restrain his sons, and the two sons, who were given up to greed and licentiousness, were at the head of the nation, and they were in large measure responsible for the demoralization of the people, for like priest, like people; the punishment threatened in our last lesson is being fulfilled, and the Philistines are God's agents in the matter.

13. *His heart trembled for the ark of God.* Probably he had not approved of its being taken into battle, but with his customary weakness he had yielded to the elders. "Eli had so many amiable qualities that we can hardly help loving him. He had so few strong qualities that we cannot possibly admire him. While we pity the man, we must condemn his frailty as no mere pardonable weakness, but a grievous fault. It was a sin against God, to whose honor he ought to have been more strictly faithful; against his children, whom he ought not only to have taught and besought, but to have disciplined and restrained; against his country, which he should have governed with a firmer hand within, and held back from foolish and impious projects without. In spite of his good intentions, we cannot conceal from ourselves that his passive, drifting life was an ignoble thing; that, in spite of his complacent ways, he was a mischievous person for a place of trust" (*Salmond*).

Egyptian Ark Carried in a Procession of Rameses

15. *Ninety and eight.* "This number is interesting as showing how mistakes arise. In the original, it was denoted by two letters. The LXX (Septuagint Version) losing sight of one, reads 90. The Syriac, confusing 9 with 7, reads 78. The Hebrew explains the cause of the other two readings" (*One Volume Commentary*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *That it may come among us and save us out of the hand of our enemies.* They treated the ark as a sort of charm, even as the heathen people do their idols which they carry into battle.

12. *With his clothes rent and with earth upon his head.* Before he uttered a word these signs of grief proclaimed his sorrowfulness to all who saw him.

13. *Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside.* "Public magistrates made the entrance gates of cities, with their spacious recesses, informal courts for the administration of justice. Eli's seat was an official chair, somewhat like those used by ancient Egyptian judges, high, carved and often ornamented, but without a back."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who were the Philistines? Where did they live? Which judge had fought with them and with what result? Where was Shiloh? What was kept in the tabernacle at Shiloh?

Fulfilment of Last Week's Promise. Note that, as printed in the Revised Version, the first clause of 4.1, Authorized Version, is included with the last verse of chapter 3: Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel, 3.21; Samuel revealed Jehovah's will to all Israel, 4.1. In our lesson today we have no mention of Samuel. Last week we heard how culpably weak Eli had been with his sons, how wicked the latter were, and how they were to be punished. Today retribution falls.

The Enemy's Strength. The Philistines held the richest plain in the land and were strong in weapons and in wealth. For a long time they had been carrying their incursions into the Israelite territory and keeping the Israelites in perpetual fear. Samson's exploits against them were undertaken for private rather than national reasons, and afforded only slight and temporary relief to the Israelites. The Philistines virtually made themselves masters of the whole country and finally succeeded in disarming the Israelites. These tyrants would not allow them to work metals, "for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears". When their agricultural implements needed repairing or their axes needed sharpening, the Israelites were forced to carry them to a Philistine smith. Until Samuel grew up and assumed control there was no leader strong enough to contend with this great enemy. We hear today of the organized attempt at resistance made under Eli and of its fatal termination.

The Fortunes of the Captured Ark. In the ninth lesson of the next Quarter we hear how the ark was brought to Jerusalem: where had it been meanwhile? The Philistines bore it in triumph to Ashdod and it remained in the Philistine land several months. It was first put in the temple of their god Dagon at Ashdod. On successive mornings the image of Dagon, we are told, was found prostrate before the ark, and painful boils broke out upon the people. Because of these occurrences, the ark was hurried away first to Gath and then to Ekron. These cities, like Ashdod, were plague-stricken, and the Philistines determined to send back the ark to Israel, for was it not the cause of their calamities? They placed the ark on a cart drawn by kine and let them take it where they would. The kine turned up the valley of Sorek and continued to the borders of the Israelites. The people of Bethshemesh received it, but a plague broke out among them, which was ascribed to their having looked into it, and they sent word to the people of Kiriath-Jearim to come and get it. There at last the ark found an abiding place in the house of Abinadab, whose son Eleazar was sanctified to take charge of it.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The positions of Ebenezer and Aphek are not known with certainty. Ebenezer was somewhere in the tribe of Judah where the mountains descend to the Plain of Sharon. The word Aphek means "strength," or "firmness," and was given to several strongholds. For the land of the Philistines, see p. 94: for Shiloh, see p. 112.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Educators have long taught that one learns to *do* by doing: religious educators are teaching that one learns to *be* by doing. Mere words do not mould character. Youth does not acquire goodness merely by passively listening to words about goodness. A silent mind may mean an absent mind.

These words of Professor James are classical: "No matter how full a reservoir of maxims one may possess, and no matter how good one's *sentiments* may be, if one has not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to *act* one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better."

Teachers may wisely meditate upon these truisms. They are called forth by our Golden Text, which is a reflection upon the knowledge and the conduct of Eli's sons. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye *do* them, said Christ: this thought a teacher should always keep in mind as the aim before him in every lesson preparation, and every opportunity which local conditions offer he should use to direct the Christian activities of his pupils. Every class should participate in some regular way, for instance, for the relief of distress. Bible Classes should do something directly for the civic improvement of the community.

Be ye *doers* of the word and not hearers only. Please note that the word is *doers* and not *don'ters*. The old method of training children by saying don't is happily disappearing: has it disappeared with you? Say Do, not Don't, say Keep on, not Stop; say Be generous; not Don't be selfish; say Do good, not Don't do evil.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS.

Tell the lesson story in four scenes: (1) the battle: (2) the surprise and fear at Shiloh, the talk about what could be done, and the decision to take the ark into battle; (3) the result, the shouts of the Israelites, the wise counsel of the Philistines, the victory, the capture of the ark, and the death of the two wicked sons of Eli; (4) Eli watching with eager eyes for the messenger from the battle, his thoughts about the ark, the coming of the messenger, the brief words between the two, the backward fall, and the death of the aged priest.

Now recall last week's lesson, and every child will readily feel that the punishment was just, it was in accordance with the fitness of things, for with children, the right must triumph and the wrong be punished, and that speedily. Explain that when Eli's sons were small boys they did wrong things, and their father did not punish them. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." Tell this to your pupils and explain it. Then tell them what Joe thought about this verse.

"Whenever folks want me to do things I don't want to do they say that verse at me!" said Joe (according to "The Picture Story Paper"). Joe frowned as he said these words, then he smiled, and Grandma, who heard the words, smiled too. "I know just how you feel," said Grandma, and Joe looked surprised and pleased. "It isn't pleasant to have verses said *AT* you. It isn't even pleasant to be prayed at, but it is sweet to be prayed *FOR*. It is also sweet to talk verses over, and to have them said *TO* you once in a while, not *AT* you."

"That's what I mean!" said Joe.

"I thought so," replied Grandma, and she smiled again as she looked into Joe's eyes, so like his father's big brown ones. "Do you remember how you admired the boy scouts out at camp?" Joe nodded. He was going to join the boy scouts as soon as he was old enough. "Do you remember when that little girl was hurt what those boys did? Three boy scouts saw the little girl fall off the wagon. She fainted. One boy ran to her, and began to work over her. Another boy ran for water. The third boy went for the ambulance. Not one of the boys said a word. They just *WORKED*. Each one knew what to do and how to do it. Each one knew what his work was. No time was lost. They were well—"

"*TRAINED!*" finished Joe, drawing a long breath.

"Yes, and because they were well trained that little girl had the best of care

at once, and no mistake was made. When those boys grow up they will not depart—"

"They won't forget it!" shouted Joe. "I see Grandma! I understand! You have to be trained in whole 'steen dozens of things while you are little so you won't forget them when you grow up!"

"That's just about it," said Grandma, laughing. "Do the right things over and over till they get to be good habits, and you will grow up to be as fine a man as—"

"Father!" shouted Joe.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. By questions review the geography and history of Lesson V.

For Older Pupils. Here is a true story for you. A man could not believe the Bible, he said, because of the ark. "I do not like to refuse to believe in its size or in its build, or in the number of animals it contained. This is all quite conceivable, and doubtless correct. But when I am asked to believe that the Children of Israel carried it about for forty years in the wilderness—well, my faith breaks down." Poor man! It isn't always the junior boys and girls nor yet even the college men and women who have strange ideas about what the Bible says, who fail to read the Bible aright, or who make their own stumbling-blocks in the pathway of faith. What was the trouble in that man's mind?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Making Religion a Last Resource

Religion is not a Matter of Mere Convenience. When the Israelites had been defeated once, they did not seek for the reason of the defeat in themselves, but they sent for the Ark, "that it may save us out of the hands of our enemies." But how many there are in our time who think of what they call their faith as a mere convenience. When everything else has failed they will take their cares to God. In the days of their health there is no prayer and no reading of the Word; but when the little one lies at the point of death, or the fabric of their fortunes is threatened, then they turn to prayer and to the Bible, as though these were magical influences to be drawn on, apart from the character and faith of the petitioner. The right way of trusting God is to trust him all through; there will never be a time of panic when there has always been time for prayer; no flying to church when there is sickness while there is only flying to golf when there is health. *R. Bruce Taylor,* In *The Sunday School Chronicle.*

Lincoln's and Washington's Constant Reliance on God. Two of the greatest names in our national history are Washington and Lincoln. Last week we spoke about Lincoln: what did we say about him? Certainly Lincoln received a call from God in the time of our nation's need just as much as did Samuel in his nation's sore straits. Today we may wisely ponder how differently he piloted the ship of state from the way those elders did in their far away time and place. Lincoln's entire life was governed by his steady faith in God—he did not flee to God as a last refuge in the time of storm and stress. Never, says Cannon Farrar, did a leading ruler depend with so steady and entire humility on God, or feel with deeper piety, and avow with manlier courage, that he was but a weak instrument in the purposes of the Almighty. "Let us *renew* our confidence in God", wrote Lincoln in his Special Session Message, 1861, and the following year he wrote: "In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party: and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect his purpose . . . By his mere great power on the minds of the now contestants he could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, he could give the final victory to either side any day."

Tomorrow is the birthday of Washington, the Father of his Country. "May

it ever be freshly remembered by American hearts!" Washington, too, relied on God at all times. One day when Friend Potts, a Quaker, was near the camp at Valley Forge, he heard an earnest voice. On approaching he saw Washington on his knees, his cheeks wet with tears, praying to God for help and guidance. When the Quaker returned to his house he said to his wife: "George Washington will succeed! The Americans will secure their independence!" "What makes thee think so, Isaac?" inquired his wife. "I have heard him pray, Hannah, out in the woods today, and the Lord will surely hear his prayer. He will, Hannah; thee may rest assured he will."

II Be Ye Doers of the Word, not Hearers Only

"He who Writes his Creed in Letters of Gold may Deny it in a Life of Brass." What is our Golden Text for today? At first sight, did it seem a forced one? Yet it is applicable to Hophni and Phinehas, who were hearers and not doers; as priests of the temple, religious leaders of the people, they knew the golden laws, but steeped in greed and sensuality as they were, their lives were of basest brass. And the word that came to Samuel ran: "I have told him (Eli) that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not." Eli was culpable, but the sons were the sinners.

In a book called "My Father", Sir William Robertson Nicoll lets us see his father as one of the greatest of readers, possessing himself a library of over seventeen thousand volumes, but, the son adds, "though he spent much time and pains on his sermons, he did not cut a channel between them and his reading." That is a striking expression which may fitly be applied to Hophni and Phinehas and all like them who know what is right but do it not.—instead of letting their knowledge flow through various little irrigation ditches to fructify in beautiful deeds, they fail to cut any channel at all between their knowledge and their conduct.

"Well, Jim, how are you getting along? Are you on the road to heaven?" an aged father was overheard questioning his son. "I'm afraid not", mumbled the son in reply. "Well, Jim, always remember one thing," the father solemnly enjoined, "if you don't git thar, it's your own fault, for you know the way."

Knowing and Doing. Our Golden Text is the word of James, and here is another of his words: To him therefore that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin. If one knows that honesty and truthfulness and temperance and unselfishness are required of God's children, then one must live obedient to these virtues. The Boy Scout knows that one should do kind deeds, and he makes it a practice to do at least one kind deed every day; he lives up to his knowledge, his knowledge fruits in action.

How vast is the conduct of the Man of Galilee compared with his words! "His voice was like the murmur of the sea, which is not nearly so great as the sea itself. His oratory was the photograph of his life. We reverse the picture and follow our gigantic philosophy with a microscopic life," writes David Swing. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them," are Christ's words to us. If every Christian lived up to his knowledge, what a revolution it would make in this world!

Golden Deeds are Better than Golden Rules. Some time ago a youth was arrested in London charged with having stolen a ring from a jeweller's shop. In his pocket at the time was found a card on which was written: Golden Rules—truthfulness, honesty, industry, sobriety, and above all, avoid bad company." With an affectation of innocence, he told the magistrate that he had studied the "golden rules" that were found upon him, and he was therefore not likely to commit a robbery. Dr. W. L. Watkinson recalls the event and, after saying that the magistrate considered that a further study of those rules was necessary in the House of Correction, adds this reflection: What a picture of the manner in which thousands of us dupe ourselves! We have golden rules in our knowledge, memory, tongue, profession, but forget them, violate them, in daily life and conduct.

And in another connection Dr. Watkinson writes: How easy it is to fall into the error of treating Christianity as if it were an abstract thing; to entertain

it as a mere doctrine, to discuss it controversially, to deal with it as a theory, as an abstruse speculation! This is a great and subtle peril. And how entirely unsatisfactory! It is like cheating ourselves with the reflection of a bank note in a looking glass. Let me realize my creed in thought, prove it in experience, illustrate it in character, obey it in daily practical life.

III Parental Culpability

Eli's Guilt. Eli seems to have been a kindly, good-natured man. He allowed his sons to do as they pleased, and the result was that they pleased to do ill. Our sympathy goes out to the aged man. His is a lovable character in many respects. Though he had failed in bringing up his own sons aright, he was a kind, true teacher for Samuel. That night's experience showed him that Samuel was to supplant him and his house, but there is not a trace of jealousy or resentment in his heart. Lovableness, however, cannot atone for weakness, and as a father Eli was culpably weak. He remonstrated mildly with his sons when they were steeped in wickedness, but then it was too late, his words were not freighted with authority, and were ineffectual.

Are Parents always to Blame when their Children Go Wrong? Do we not often see wickedness in the sons and daughters of the best of parents? Not so often as we think, for the best of men and women sometimes fail in their duty as parents and are therefore not the best of parents. Eli is a striking illustration of this fact. But do not the sons of good parents sometimes fail to follow in the parents' footsteps? Yes, sometimes good men and women are good parents, and then they are not to blame for their children's sins. We know that Samuel's mantle did not fall upon his own sons, and there is no indication as in the case of Eli and his sons, that Samuel failed in his duty to them.

Honor thy Sons and thy Daughters. But stay, father, did you accustom the boy to virtue, and teach truth to the child at your knee? "Honor thy father and thy mother". Amen. May his days be long who fulfills the command: but implied though unwritten on the table, is there not the order, "Honor thy son and thy daughter"? Pray heaven that we, whose days are already not few in the land, may keep the ordinance, too. *Thackeray,* in *Philip.*

A Parable of a Prodigal Father. A certain man had two sons and the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of thy time, and thy attention, and thy companionship, and thy counsel which falleth to me." And he divided unto them his living in that he paid the boy's bills and sent him to a select preparatory school, and to dancing school, and to college, and tried to believe that he was doing his full duty by the boy.

And not many days after the father gathered all his interests and aspirations and ambitions and took his journey into a far country, into a land of stocks and bonds and securities and other things which do not interest a boy; and there he wasted his precious opportunity of being a chum to his own son. And when he had spent the very best of his life and had gained money but had failed to find satisfaction, there arose a mighty famine in his heart; and he began to be in want of sympathy and real companionship. And he went and joined himself to one of the clubs of that country; and they elected him Chairman of the House Committee and President of the Club and sent him to Congress. And he would fain have satisfied himself with the husks that other men did eat and no man gave unto him any real companionship.

But when he came to himself, he said, "How many men of my acquaintance have boys whom they understand and who understand them, who talk about their boys and seem perfectly happy in the comradeship of their sons, and I perish here with heart hunger! I will arise and go to my son, and will say unto him, Son, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy father; make me as one of thy acquaintances." And he arose and came to his son. But while he was yet afar off, his son saw him, and was moved with astonishment, and instead of running and falling on his neck, he drew back and was ill at ease. And the father said unto him, "Son, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy father. Forgive me now and let me be your friend." But the son said, "Not so, I wish it were possible, but it is too late. There was a time

when I wanted companionship and counsel and to know things but you were too busy. I got companionship and I got the information, but I got the wrong kind and now, alas, I am wrecked in soul and body, there is no more heart left in me, and there is nothing you can do for me. It is too late, too late, too late." *Blake W. Godfrey.*

Dangerous Parents. It is not drunken parents who are most dangerous to the generation that follows; for by their excesses they very often create a reaction in their children. It is careless parents, shifty, and insincere parents with no impressive sense of the reality of God and his government, or of the natural persistence and irremediableness of sin. If we are hasty, if we are wanting in self-control in little temptations, or if, while ostensibly religious, we are insincere; or have no sense of the awfulness of sin and of its certain effects; or if we tamper with the truth or compromise our consciences, while outwardly respectable and regular in life—we are infecting our children with just that evil which in them may break out in violent and ruinous extremes. *Dr. George Adam Smith.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. There must be justice and retribution. See "The Wages of Sin," *Outlook*, March 30, 1912.

2. Are parents of to-day derelict in bringing up their children? How far is a parent responsible for the children's sins? See Third Topic; and "The Problem of the Wayward Child Is That of the Incompetent Parent," *Harper's Weekly*, December 2, 1911.

3. The father's part in the child's moral and religious education. "The mother puts in the commas and the semicolons into a child's life," says Jean Paul Richter, "but the father puts in the colons and periods." See "The Profession of Fatherhood" in the *Child Welfare Magazine* for August, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What were the Israelites in the habit of doing on the great Day of Atonement, which they now observed at this penitential time? (Lev. 16.29.) 2. What does the name Mizpah mean, who gave the name and why? (Gen. 31.49.) 3. In what three other verses of the Bible is the figure of speech of verse 6 of our lesson used? (See the references given in your Bible in connection with this verse. Note that over the word *poured* is the little letter *k*; find *k* in the references given between the two columns.) 4. What is thunder called in Ps. 29.3, 4? 5. What other instances of Samuel at prayer are recorded? (1 S. 8.6; 12, 17, 18, 23; 15.11.) 6. On what occasion did Joshua set up a stone to commemorate a great event. (Josh. 24.26, 27.) 7. What is said of Samuel in Ps. 99.6? 8. What does the reference to Samuel in Jer. 15.1 tell you about Samuel's reputation?

Questions to think about. 1. How do we know that the assembly lasted for some time? (Verses 6 and 10.) 2. What is the meaning of the symbolical act recorded in verse 6? (*Guide*, ¶ 2, p. 127.) 3. For whom should you pray? 4. Why did the Israelites gain the victory this time over the enemy that defeated them under Eli. 5. Why did Samuel set up the stone Ebenezer? 6. Who can say like Samuel, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us? 7. How would you finish that saying of Samuel's? (And he will continue to help us.)

Note-Book Work. In your life of Samuel write Part III, Samuel's Message about Eli and his Sons Fulfilled. Add a characterization of the sons of Eli by their father and an appreciation of the worth and weakness of Eli.

Questions on the Books of Samuel. 1. Why is Samuel divided into two Books? 2. Who wrote the Books? 3. What do the duplicate accounts indicate? 4. How were the Books written? 5. When were they written? 6. For what purpose were they written? 7. Why are they called Books of Samuel? 8. What period of history do they cover? 9. What is the character of the government of Israel at the beginning of the period? 10. At the close? 11. What great personalities appear in the Books? 12. Write an outline of the Books. 13. How do they rank as literature? 14. What are their lessons for today?

LESSON IX—FEBRUARY 28

SAMUEL, THE VICTORIOUS LEADER

Golden Text

Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. I Samuel 7.12

LESSON I Samuel 7.3-17 MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah; and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. 10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. 17 And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and he built there an altar unto Jehovah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

3-4. Naturally, these verses would follow verses 5 and 6. Probably verse 3 is the substance of countless exhortations of Samuel to the people.—*If . . heart.* This clause is put first for emphasis.—*Put away the foreign gods from among you.* Destroy the images and altars and groves of the gods worshipped by the native races of Canaan.—*And serve him only.* Worship him only. Compare Mt. 6.24: No man can serve two masters. "What is religion but loyalty to God?" (*Bushnell*).—*The Baalim and the Ashtaroth.* These Hebrew plural names stand for the gods and goddesses of the Canaanites. Ashtoreth (singular) corresponds to the Babylonian Ishtar and the Greek Astarte.

The Babylonian Goddess Ishtar

5. *I will pray for you.* Samuel was noted as being among those who called on the name of the Lord, Ps. 99.6. He that prayeth for another is heard for himself, is a Jewish saying. "For everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven, but neither days, nor hours, nor seasons, did ever come amiss to faithful prayer (*Jeremy Taylor*).

6. *Poured it out before Jehovah.* This was done as on the great Day of Atonement: the Targum explains that the pouring out of water was symbolical of the pouring out of their hearts in penitence before the Lord. Compare Lam. 2.19: Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord. It had a further meaning that their vows just made would never be broken, for they were "like water spilt upon the ground which can not be gathered up again". Or, "Sin was to be cast away as completely as water poured out upon the earth."—*And fasted on that day.* As the law required on the great Day of Atonement.—*We have sinned against Jehovah.* They made a public confession of their sin.—*And Samuel judged the children of Israel.* "Probably to be taken in the sense in which other rulers are said to judge: he heard the cause of the oppressed and secured their rights" (*Smith*). *In Mizpah.* This gathering of the people was for a somewhat lengthy period, for the Philistines meanwhile had time to arm themselves and advance to the attack.

7. *And when the Philistines heard.* A national assembling of the Israelites would make the Philistines suspicious that the former were preparing to fight them, and made them hasten to attack before the Israelites were ready.

8. *And he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.* In the previous great battle with the Philistines the Israelites had relied upon a thing, the ark, to save them (last lesson): now their reliance is on spiritual weapons.

9. *A whole burnt-offering.* "The offering of the whole animal symbolized the self-dedication of the worshipper."—*And Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel.* He is afterwards known as one that called upon God, 1 S. 9.6, 7, 8, 9, Ps. 99.6; Jer. 15.1—*Jehovah answered him.* Verses 10 and 11 record the answer.

10-11. *Jehovah thundered with a great thunder.* Hebrew, *voice,* RVm. The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth, Ps. 29.3.—*Under.* That is, south of.

12. *Took a stone and set it.* Compare Joshua's "stone of witness", Josh. 24. 26, 27, and see ¶ 5, p. 128.—*Mizpah.* The name means Watch Tower: See Gen. 31.49.—*Ebenezer.* That is, The Stone of help. RVm. This was the very spot where Israel had met that great defeat at the hands of the Philistines which led to the capture of the ark, last lesson. *Hitherto.* Up to this time. Dr. Henry Preserved Smith observes that it was not only to this point but beyond it that Jehovah had helped them, and because, moreover, there is no declaration concerning the object of setting up the stone, he suggests this reading: "This is a witness that Jehovah has helped us."

13. *They came no more within the border of Israel.* The victory is described as complete, the cities which the Philistines had taken were restored, and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Yet our next lessons tell us of continued warfare against the Philistines, in Samuel's lifetime, within the border of Israel. In 1 S. 9.16 the people are spoken of as groaning under the oppression of the Philistines; in 10.5 mention is made of a Philistine garrison stationed at Gibeah: in 13.19, 20, the Israelites are in subjection to the Philistines: in 14.52 there is mention of continuous warfare with the Philistines; and 13.5; 17.1; and 23.27 record three invasions of the Philistines. The explanation is this: "We must remember that the custom of the Hebrew annalist is to look forward to the ultimate results of an action and describe them as if immediate. The clause includes the effect; and the repentance of the people, brought about by Samuel's efforts and crowned with the Divine approval at Mizpah, contained within it the complete deliverance of the nation. Israel's regeneration was wrought first in the hearts of the people: its restoration to Jehovah's favor was shown by the victory at Ebenezer: finally, Saul and David, as Samuel's instruments, wrought out the legitimate effect of Samuel's work in setting Israel free from the yoke of foreign dominion."

14. *From Ekron even unto Gath.* The towns between these cities, not the cities themselves. "There is no evidence that Gath had ever been occupied

by the Israelites, and Ekron was only held for a short time, Judg. 1.18."—*Amorites.* A general term here for the native races of Canaan.

16. *He went from year to year in circuit.* He seems to have been an itinerant judge, going to the people rather than having them come to him at his fixed abode. In earlier times there were "circuit-riders" among the Methodist preachers.

17. *His return was to Ramah . . and he built an altar unto the Lord.* Until Eli's death, Samuel had lived at Shiloh. The taking away of the ark deprived the tabernacle at Shiloh of its sacredness and Samuel went to Ramah, his native town, and built there an altar, making it the place of sacrifice.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

8. *Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us.* Contrast with this privilege of prayer the beautiful but pathetic custom that prevails among the people of Thibet. When a snowstorm rages the people in the border villages remember those in the interior, the pilgrims and the merchants who are in danger of death from the fury of the tempest. They buy "paper horses" (pieces of paper with a picture of a horse stamped on each) from a lama and, in spite of wind and snow, climb the nearest mountain top and set the "paper horses" free. As the wind carries the "horses" away, the people pray to Buddha, asking him to lay them at the feet of the storm-driven pilgrims, and to turn them into living horses which will bear the pilgrims to their homes in safety.

12. *Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen.* The erection of a stone to commemorate any important event has always been customary in the orient. Much of our information of the ancient Chaldeans and Assyrians and Egyptians has been gleaned from the inscriptions on their memorial stones. Sennacherib boasts that

> "A tablet I caused to make, and
> The glory acquired by my hand, which over them
> I had gained, upon it I caused to write, and
> In the midst of the city I set it up."

On the hills overlooking the Golden Horn several marble pillars have been set up, marking the spot to which the different sultans have shot arrows in their archery practice.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In the Book of Judges what is the oft-repeated refrain about apostasy, and repentance and relief? In Deborah's and Barak's victory over the Canaanites, how were they providentially aided? Who were the Philistines? What judge had contended with them and with what result? What defeat had happened at Ebenezer? Upon what had the Israelites depended in this battle? How did the news of the capture of the ark effect Eli? What have you heard about Samuel?

Samuel, the Great Reformer. The death of Eli and his sons left Israel without a leader. During the twenty years in which the ark was kept in a private house at Kiriath-jearim, (see ¶ 7, p. 120) it was no longer the rallying point for religious worship, and the people sank into idolatry as gross as that of their heathen neighbors. We are told nothing about Samuel from the time of his boyhood as Eli's assistant till now he appears as the great reformer, but his influence over the people when now he assembles them at Mizpah shows that meanwhile he must have been growing in power, and have been sowing the seeds of righteousness which now spring into fruitage. When he pleaded with them and told them that their misery was the result of their apostasy, with one consent they resolved to put away their idols and serve Jehovah wholly. Samuel had reawakened the spiritual and national life.

Samuel the Victorious Leader. The time was ripe for action. The deliverance from the Philistine yoke which Samson began to effect was furthered by Samuel. During the period in Samuel's history which is passed over in

silence there was continued oppression at the hands of the Philistines. The success of the Philistines at Ebenezer (last lesson) was followed by complete mastery over the neighboring Israelite tribes. In our lesson today we see Samuel heartening his people for victory, a victory which is described as complete and final. See "Words and Phrases Explained," verse 13, for the explanation in regard to the later recorded battles with the Philistines.

Samuel the Great Prophet and Judge. Samuel is the connecting link between the judges and the kings. He is himself the last of the judges and the first of that long line of prophets who curbed the despotic power of the kings. As judge he went from place to place, though Ramah was his headquarters. He established a theological seminary (a college for prophets) at Ramah; others were later founded at Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and elsewhere. Among the later historians Samuel's reputation is very great. Jeremiah couples him with Moses. As Moses was the great legislator and founder of the priestly rule, so Samuel was the great reformer and organizer of the prophetic order.

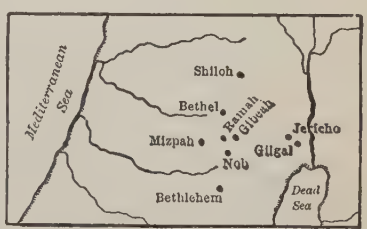
A Reminder of the Book of Judges. Our lesson recalls very forcibly the history repeated over and over again in the Book of Judges—apostasy, repentance, reformation, relief. And as in the stories of the judges in the Book of Judges, Samuel obtains his Judgeship because of his success in warfare against his country's foes.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

This little map represents the section of Palestine west from the northern end of the Dead Sea and the lower course of the Jordan. It locates the chief places mentioned in the life of Samuel. His home was at Ramah. As judge he visited Bethel (modern Beiten), Gilgal, and Mizpah.

The name *Mizpah* signifies "Watch Tower," and was given to several "lofty places" in Palestine where one can see far across the country. The Mizpah where Samuel assembled the people was a few miles northeast of Bethlehem. It is now called Neby Samwil (Tomb of Samuel); a Crusader's Church, now in ruins, occupies the traditional site of his tomb.

The name *Gilgal* signifies "A Stone Circle", and it, also, was given to several places. The Gilgal where Samuel went in his circuit was not far from Jericho.



Map Showing the Places Connected with The Lif of Samuel

Ekron was in the northwest part of the Philistine Plain, in the tribe of Dan. Gath was south of Ekron, in the tribe of Judah. See the large colored map.

Beth-car is now known as the Well of the Vineyards.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO ALL TEACHERS

Samuel was known as a man of prayer. Are you a man or a woman of prayer? The Israelites knew that he prayed for them. Do your pupils know that you cease not to pray for them? Is your prayer-life self-centered? Are your petitions for yourself, your interests, your spiritual life, or do you at times drop the personal quest and seek the spiritual welfare of others at the throne of God?

Do you know the burden and the happiness of intercessory prayer? Do you know your pupils individually, their ambitions and temptations, so that you can pray for definite results in their lives? Will you not fulfill this pledge of the "Teachers' League of Prayer": "I promise to unite in prayer every Sunday morning on behalf of the world's Sunday Schools and definitely for my own school and church and class"?

In a book entitled "Secret Prayer", the Reverend H. C. G. Moule tells the secret of a Sunday-school teacher who was a success. "She was the means under God of bringing scholar after scholar, with always growing frequency,

to the feet of Jesus in living conversion, evidenced by a new life of love and consistency. After her death her simple diary was found to contain among other entries the three following statements, with some intervals between: 'Resolved to pray for each scholar by name'; 'Resolved to wrestle in prayer for each scholar by name'; 'Resolved to wrestle for each by name, and to expect an answer'."

For Bible Class Teachers Dr. J. H. Jowett has a message: "How it is with us and our people? Have we got beneath their burdens and cried out to God? By delicate imagination have we got beneath the pride of this woman and the carelessness of that man, and the sorrow of the disappointed soul yonder? Andrew Bonar, one of the greatest Scotch preachers and one of our greatest saints, used to go every Friday morning into his church, lock the door, and then begin in that empty church to identify himself with each individual member, crying out from the depths of one man's trouble and another man's shame, one woman's vanity and another woman's woe, until the river of life flowed among his people like a brimming, strong river of his native country."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Review the lesson for two weeks ago, and secure your pupils' interest in the little boy Samuel. That boy grew to manhood and took Eli's place. Show Tissot's picture of Samuel at Ramah, No. 77. Describe the scene at Mizpah, the tents, the people fasting and confessing that they had sinned in worshipping idols. Then came the news that their enemy, the Philistines, was marching upon them; describe the terror of the people; their trust in Samuel's prayer for help; the near approach of the enemy; the thunder and downpour of rain that frightened the enemy and made them flee, but gave courage to the Israelites, because the Israelites knew that God was with them and helping them smite the Philistines; and the victory. Dwell longest upon your account of the Stone of Help, its meaning to Samuel and the people, and its lesson for us. Ask your pupils if they remember to thank God for all he has done for them. Teach them this prayer:

"We have so much to thank thee for,
Dear Father of the Heaven,
So very many pleasant things
Thy love to us has given.
We thank thee for our happy homes,
With all their love and care,
For father and for mother,
And for all the children there."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, after his defeat at Kunersdorf on the 12th of August, 1759, summoned von Möller, the head of his artillery. "How does it happen, Möller", he asked, "that for a long time we have had so little success in our battles?" Möller was not only a strong military leader, but also a man of deep piety. He answered the king: "Your Majesty, the misfortune in warfare comes from the lack of religion in the army." "What has religion to do with battles and politics?" asked the king sharply. Möller replied: "Many a general has observed that it has not harmed your Majesty when you have attacked the enemy with the cry 'Order Thou our way'. Your Majesty must not let the fear of God depart from the army, must again appoint preachers to teach the troops to pray. A good prayer is half the battle." The king was silent. Several days later he called for a cessation of the battle while chaplains read the word of God. And Divine service was held daily in the camp thereafter.

What words of Samuel are recalled by General Möller's words to Frederick the Great?

For Older Pupils. After the Battle of Waterloo a dispatch was sent to England by the semaphore-telegraph. "Wellington defeated," were the words received, and then a dense fog came up. For three long days London lamented,

but with the reappearing sun came the rest of the message—"the French at Waterloo!"

Last week we heard how the Israelites were defeated near Ebenezer. Their loss in men was very heavy: and their sacred ark was taken. Twenty years have passed. Today the news is revoked. It is the Philistines at Ebenezer whom the Israelites defeat. Why were the Israelites defeated in the former battle? Why are they victorious now?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Great Men of Prayer

Samuel the Man of Prayer. "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call on his name": as much as to say that Samuel stands at the head of all the men of prayer in Israel, just as Moses and Aaron stand at the head of the prophets and priests in Israel. The successors of Moses and Aaron were a glorious enough succession; but all that fades and vanishes away before the far greater glory of pure and unceasing prayer, and especially of unceasing and intercessory and undeserved prayer. "As for me", said Samuel, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Samuel said that as his answer to his sentence of deposition and banishment from being their head and their king in all but the name. Samuel, then, among them that pray for their enemies and for them that despitefully use them. Samuel among them that are cast off and forgotten after a lifetime of self-forgetful service. Samuel among them that cease not to pray for the prosperity of those who have taken their place in the world and in the Church, and in the hearts and the mouths of men. Samuel among them who have such a pure heart that nothing will ever turn their heart to gloom, or bitterness, or discontent, or retaliation, or to anything else, but to still more prayer. *Dr. Alexander Whyte* in *Bible Characters.*

A Persevering Intercessor. George Müller began early in life to pray for five personal friends. Five years passed, and only one of them was brought to Christ. In ten years' time another of them found the Saviour. A short time before Mr. Müller's death, Dr. A. T. Pierson asked him if he had besought God for anything which had not been granted, and he replied that he had prayed over sixty-two years for two men to be converted and neither of them showed any indication of interest in God. What perseverance in intercessory prayer was this! "Do you expect God to convert them?" Dr. Pierson asked. "Certainly," came the ready response. "Do you suppose that God would put upon his child for sixty-two years the burden of two souls if he had no purpose of their conversion?" Shortly after Mr. Müller's death, these two men were brought to Christ.

Saintly Men of Prayer. "Had I known what I now know of the service of prayer," said a dying saint, "I would have given three-fourths of my day to intercession." Dr. Bachus, a former President of Hamilton College, was told that he had but half an hour to live. "Is that so?" he cried; "then take me out of my bed, and put me on my knees, and let me spend it calling on God for the salvation of the world." His request was granted; he died upon his knees.

II Intercessory Prayer

Cease not to Cry unto Jehovah our God for us. A minister who was making his parish calls had occasion to cross the railroad tracks at a time when, for a few moments, no trains were in sight. Meeting the flagman face to face, the minister spoke to him as he passed. The flagman's face lighted up at the greeting, and he responded heartily.

The minister was about to continue his walk, but the flagman detained him. "Brother," said he, "my work is hard. My hours are long, and my work is trying. I'm here to help the people if I can. I live and sleep in fear that some dreadful thing is going to happen here, and that I shall be blamed for it. You look to me like a preacher. I wonder if you ever pray for men like me? Do you think of the men who get no Sundays, who give up their day of rest so that other people can get across the tracks to your church, and who try

to do good and get blamed more often than they get praised for doing their duty?"

"Brother," the minister said, "I greet you. I do sometimes pray for men who give up their Sundays for other people. I think of the policeman on his beat, and the fireman in the engine-house, and of men like you. And I thank you for stopping me. I shall pray for such men more earnestly than I have ever done before." *Youth's Companion.*

Enlarge the Circle of your Intercessions. When Dr. J. H. Jowett was preaching in Newcastle-on-Tyne one of the deacons was a Scot named David Moffat. No one knew whom David Moffat would pray for when he arose in the prayer-meeting, all manner of odds and ends, all manner of queer remnants, all manner of forgotten people, wasted people, were included in his prayer, Dr. Jowett tells us. If a gypsy caravan went through the town, those people were in his prayer the next Sunday morning. If, when he looked through the paper, he saw the story of the victim of some human need set up in small print, the next Sunday morning David Moffat had it out in large print as he offered up his need at the table of the Lord's grace. There was many a man and there was many a woman who went home from these meetings determined to look out for some new guest, for some new child of need, that they might bring them to their communion table and offer them at the mercy seat to the grace of the Lord Jesus. If you want to pray with spirit, and if you want your prayerfulness to be fresh and sweet and wholesome through the plural number, enlarge the circle of your intercession continually.

The Missionary's Need. The most crucial problem of foreign missions is, how to lead Christians to use what Dr. Arthur H. Smith, of China, has characterized as "The deeply buried talent of intercessory prayer." Without doubt the flood tide of superhuman power is held back from the missionary movement owing more largely to this cause than to any other. The evangelization of the world is not primarily a matter of numbers, wealth, knowledge, and strategy, but of the unhindered working of the Spirit of God. Such divine manifestation has been associated invariably with prayer. Whatever, therefore, influences Christians one by one and also corporately to devote themselves in the right spirit and manner to missionary intercession will most directly and effectively insure the realization of the missionary purpose of Christ. *Dr. John R. Mott,* in *The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions.*

What Intercessory Prayer Involves. As far as I can see, the answer to my prayer for any one comes in suggestion to me of something I can do for the one for whom I am praying. If no such suggestion comes, then my prayer is a committal of that one to the Father's care and keeping. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Outlook.*

III Ebenezers

Appreciation of God's Mercies. As Abraham journeyed from one place to another, he erected altars to commemorate his appreciation of God's mercies to him. Gradually Canaan was dotted over with memorial stones. Jacob and Joshua erected them to recall signal blessings received from God. Ebenezer, A Stone of Help, Samuel called the stone which he erected, for "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us."

Everyone has abundant reason to set up his Ebenezer; he need only measure his mercies "by the foot-rule of his deserts," to discover how great is his debt of gratitude to God. But many are like Samuel in asking God's help in an undertaking, but unlike that prophet in expressing their gratitude for help received.

And hearts say, "God be pitiful!"
Which ne'er say, "God be praised!"

A Lesson from "Black Rock". In "Black Rock" there is a bit of keen analysis that we may not have noticed as we were borne along in the rapid movement of the tale. Old man Nelson had begun his fight for manhood the night before, and come into Black Rock to spend Christmas Day, when Craig, wisest of parsons, met him and inquired how the battle had gone. Nelson, full of fear, admitted that he had not lost his grip, but his heart was

full of foreboding. Craig replied almost sternly: "I'll bet you haven't thought it worth while to thank him for keeping you where you are one night." The old man turned quickly and went into the stable; a few moments later he came out and his face was lighted up with a trembling joy. It is an illustration of a great principle. The best way in which to banish fear concerning the future is to recall the experiences of the past which are the warrant for hope. *Zion's Herald.*

A Suggestion. It is good to build memorials to the marvelous deliverances of God. Frances Ridley Havergal kept a "Journal of Mercies". She built her own cairns along the road, and she often went over the old track and recalled the goodness of the Lord. In her latter years she could visit the shrines of earlier years, and all the days were joined together in the shining memories of grace.

Why cannot we keep anniversaries of providence, building memorials all through the year, and making the recurring dates richer and richer with reminders of the goodness of God! The road of our life would be alive with holy suggestiveness, and we should always go into God's house "in the multitude of his mercies." *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

We think of prayer for others as a privilege; but Samuel regarded it as a duty; not to pray for his people was to him a sin. Was he not right? Can we not be as selfish in our prayers as in our actions? He who is self-centered in his active life is self-centered in his prayer-life. He who would know the joy of living for others must know, too, the joy of praying for others. Phillips Brooks once said that in the beginning of his Christian life he felt that it was all he could do to get his own soul saved; perhaps one reason why so many Christians do not have his later experience is that they fail to advance beyond this first stage where they are engrossed in their own needs.

That prayer for others is sincere which is followed up by service for others.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Books of Samuel. See pp. 31, 32 of the Introduction to this Guide.
2. Intercessory Prayer. See the Second Topic, and "Is Prayer a Form of Selfishness?" *Outlook,* April 13, 1912.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. Why did the Israelites demand a king? (1 S. 8.1-5, 19-20.) 2. How did Samuel protest against their demand? (1 S. 8.10-18.) 3. What effect did his protest have upon the people? 4. How is Saul described in 1 S. 9.2? 5. Why did Saul think of returning before finding the lost asses? (1 S. 9.3-5.) 6. What counsel did his servant give? (1 S. 9.6-10.) 7. What counsel did Saul receive from the maidens whom he met? (1 S. 9.11-13.) 8. What is the explanation of the word "seer" given in chapter 9? 9. For what purposes was the gateway of an oriental city used? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 136). 10. How was the housetop used? 11. What directions did Samuel give Saul after the anointing? (1 S. 10.21-27.) 12. What is said about Saul among the prophets in 1 S. 10.9-13? 13. What report of his interview with Samuel did Saul give at home? (1 S. 10.14-16.)

Questions to think about. 1. Why did the people want a king? 2. Why did their wish displease Samuel? 3. Who said "he must increase, but I must decrease", and how did Samuel face the same situation? 4. Why was it wise that the king should come from a small tribe? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 135.) 5. What qualifications had Saul for kingship? (Guide, ¶ 7, p. 138.) 6. Why did Samuel bid Saul go before him? 7. What is the difference between a seer and a prophet? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 134.) 8. What do you think Samuel would say to Saul when they talked together on the housetop? 9. What was the meaning of the anointing?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Samuel write Part IV., Samuel the Victorious Leader and Deliverer.

LESSON X—MARCH 7

SAUL ANOINTED KING

Golden Text

Fear God. Honor the King. I Peter 2.17

LESSON I Samuel 8-10: verses 9.17-10.1 printed. MEMORIZE verse 10.1

9. 17 And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people. 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. 19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day; and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. 20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? 21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, who were about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 34 And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold, that which hath been reserved! set it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. 26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27 As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us (and he passed on), But stand thou still first, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God.

10. 1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

17. *When Samuel saw Saul.* Saul's appearance is described in verse 2.—*Said unto him.* Hebrew, *answered him,* RVm. The thought is that Samuel received an answer to the question that was in his mind.—*The man whom I spake to thee of.* See verse 16 and 9.23.—*Shall reign over my people.* Literally, shall *restrain* my people.

18. *In the gate.* In the gateway. See ¶ 2, p. 136.—*The seer's house.* "The seer was consulted in all domestic details, and he gave his oracle by consulting various methods of divination. But the prophet was in a different sense the man of God. He waited for his message of God coming to him directly without any mediation of material things; the subjects he dealt with were, too, of wider bearing—the relation of the nation to God, the future of the nation, the religious purpose of Israel. Samuel marks the transition. He is partly 'seer', partly 'prophet'; his aid is invited in the discovering of lost property and in the setting apart of a king for the chosen people" (*R. Bruce Taylor*).

19. *Go up before me.* Thus Samuel showed Saul great respect. Note the courtesy that Samuel shows throughout the story to the man who is to take Samuel's place at the head of the nation. No man ever stepped down more

graciously for his successor.—*All that is in thy heart.* All that you wish to know.

20. *Set not thy mind on them.* Be not anxious about them.—*All the desire of Israel.* This is a very indefinite expression, but it awakens great expectations in Saul, for he replies in amazement, verse 21.

21. *Of the smallest of the tribes of Israel.* The tribe of Manasseh was originally smaller than that of Benjamin (Num. 1.37) but the slaughter recorded in Judges 20.46 had reduced Benjamin to the smallest number. It was well to have the king chosen from a small tribe; had he belonged to the large tribe of Ephraim, Judah would have been jealous, if of Judah, then Ephraim would have rebelled.—*My family the least of all the families.* The extravagant expression of humility is in accordance with Eastern custom, but Dr. Alexander Whyte gives Saul credit for sincerity in these words: "That is the language of a man whose heart is really touched for the time with divine grace. That is real humility; and humility is the root of all graces, both natural and supernatural. And had Saul only dwelt on that thought; had he returned all his days to that thought; that thought dwelt upon and added to at every new occasion and fresh proof of God's goodness and his own ill deserts—that would soon have made Saul's heart a new heart. But it was not so to be with Saul. As time went on, and as trials and temptations beset Saul, a hard and strong heart, a spirit of rebellion, and pride, and envy, and jealousy, and despair took possession of Saul, and held possession of Saul to his bitter end." —*Wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?* Compare Henry Martyn's words when he received his appointment as chaplain to the troops in India—the first step on the road to his life as a missionary: "What am I, or what is my father's house, that I should be made willing, and what am I that I should be so happy and honored?"

22. *The guest chamber.* Evidently a room used especially for sacrificial feasts. See verses 12-13. It is the same word which later was used for the "chamber" in the temple enclosure occupied by the priests and Levites.—*Made them sit in the chiefest place.* The fact that Saul's servant was given the place of honor as well as Saul himself shows how simple were the customs of the time: the servant as well as Saul was an honored guest.

24. *Thigh.* Or, *shoulder,* RVm. A choice piece especially reserved for those honored with the chief seat at table. Driver thinks that "the fat tail" of certain breeds of sheep is meant, which is still esteemed a delicacy in the East: when served it much resembles marrow. Another translation is *the leg,* for the right leg was the priest's portion (Lev. 7.32), which would have been reserved for Samuel.—*That which was upon it.* "Such of the fat upon the flesh as was not intended for the a'tar" (*Delitzsch*).—*That which hath been reserved.* Thus Saul was made acquainted with the special honor given him.—*Set it before thee and eat.* "Verse 13 suggests that Samuel and Saul did not take their meal after the others had finished, but that the other guests waited to begin their meal until Samuel had arrived: what we expect, therefore, here is a polite invitation to Saul, as the guest of honor, to begin the meal; the others would then begin theirs" (*Driver*).

25-26. *He communed with Saul upon the housetop.* For the use of the housetop, see p. 136.—Driver prefers the Septuagint Version here, translating it thus: And they spread a couch for Saul on the housetop, and he lay down. To this Samuel's calling to Saul on the housetop in the morning, verse 26, forms a natural and suitable sequel.—*About the spring of the day.* About dawn. This is the time for departure in that hot country. Compare our old English word *daybreak.*

10.1. *Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee?* Hath not Jehovah anointed thee? Samuel reminds Saul that it is Jehovah who has chosen him to be king, and to Jehovah, therefore, he is responsible for the way he rules. As Shakespeare says:—

> If you were born to honor show it now;
> If put upon you, make the judgment good
> That thought you worthy of it.

Anointed. Before this only the priests and the sanctuary had been anointed. "When Saul, therefore, was consecrated as king by anointing, the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution, standing on a par with the priesthood" (*Delitzsch*). "According to Jewish tradition, anointing was only necessary when a new dynasty came to the throne or the succession was disputed. Hence we only find mention of it in the case of Saul; David; Absalom; Solomon; Joash; Jehoahaz, who was not the oldest son of Josiah; Jehu. The ceremonies of this first recorded coronation are still observed in England. The anointing is performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the kiss of homage is given by the Archbishop, bishops, and premier peer of each rank for the rest of his order" (*Kirkpatrick*).

Egyptian Representation of Anointing From Thebes

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

18. *In the gate.* This means the gateway through the fortifications into the city. Such a gateway was flanked with towers and had a chamber above it. The gate of an Eastern city has always been the public meeting place for the people. Among the Israelites justice was administered at the gate and the hearing of suits was public. In the times that succeeded the choice of Saul the kings transacted business either in the shade of the city gate, or of the gate of the palace (2 S. 19.8). The cabinet of the Sultan of Turkey is known at the present time as "the Ottoman Porte" (*Porte* being the French word for *gate*), and the Turkish government is spoken of as "the Sublime Porte" (the High Gate).

20. *Thine asses that were lost.* Recently a traveler was eating his luncheon in his camp set up by the wayside when a Bedouin girl wrapped in a dark blue cloak came along and spoke to the dragoman. "She is from the other side of Jordan, three days' journey", reported the dragoman. "Two of her father's camels have strayed, and she was set to look for them. She has traveled three days, but she cannot find them, and she has had nothing to eat today. I am going to give her some luncheon." The girl took the food eagerly, and going a few steps away sat down to devour it. But before she could begin four hungry-looking peasants ran to her and one of them seized the food and divided it into five portions. "They say she asked them for news about the camels, and that now she must share her meal with them", the dragoman growled to his employer. The girl looked at her scanty share sadly, but with no thought of rebelling. When her self-invited guests were gone, the traveler brought her a second generous supply and waited till she had devoured it all, unmolested.

25. *Upon the housetop.* The flat roofs of the houses in Palestine are still used for sleeping in the hot months, and are resorted to by those who would have a quiet talk away from the rest of the household or the neighbors.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In the earliest history of the Hebrews, who were the leaders? Who were the leaders during the Wilderness Wandering? Who led the people into Canaan? What are the leaders called who ruled after Joshua? What sort of young men were Eli's sons? How was Eli culpable concerning them? What message did Samuel have to give Eli because of this? Who was the first man whom the Israelites wanted to have for a king? (*Gideon.*)

Israel becomes a Monarchy. For a long time Samuel, the greatest of all the judges, ruled in peace. Then the Philistines again troubled the Israelites. Moreover, it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre and took bribes and perverted justice. It is not said that Samuel had been culpable in the training of his sons, as was Eli with his sons, but the effect upon the Israelites was most disastrous. They needed a strong man at their head to unite them as a nation and save them from the combined opposition of the Philistines. Then, too, they had long envied their neighbors who gloried

in their kings and the Israelites would be like them and have their own king. Therefore the elders came to Samuel at Ramah and asked him to give them a king. Samuel was not pleased at their request; he preferred a more direct dependence of the nation upon Jehovah. He made a solemn protest, telling them what they would suffer under a king, but the people persisted.

Samuel was a true statesman, he saw that the time had come when Israel must have a king, and he yielded. Thus began the United Kingdom of Israel. Hitherto the freedom from enemies had been gained through spasmodic efforts, led by champions who had appeared when needed, but upon their death the tribes had lapsed into the same disunion and confusion and anarchy. Even in the days of Israel's theocracy, have we seen how necessary was a human leader. In this crisis in Israel's history, when the people were no longer content to be a theocracy, the monarchy was established under Samuel's wise leadership. Under Divine guidance, he selected Saul to be the first king of Israel. Samuel, the last of the judges and the greatest, was the founder both of the monarchy and also of the prophetic order. By him schools of the prophets were established. Instead of a priest only, and a judge in times of special stress only, from henceforth Israel has a king, and as long as the monarchy lasted, a prophet, to confront the king and check the royal power.

The Account in First Samuel of the Choice of Saul as King. It is believed by the majority of scholars that we have in the First Book of Samuel two different accounts of the election of Saul as king, and that the account in which Samuel's hostility to the movement appears is the representation of a later writer who had seen the abuses of kingly power. Yet it is quite possible to reconcile the two accounts. The fact that Saul is formally chosen by lot in the tenth chapter, is no disproof of his having been already selected by Samuel as told in our lesson, for the casting of lots may have been merely a matter of form. But see ¶ 3, p. 30 of our Introduction.

After the Anointing. After anointing Saul, the prophet gave him several "signs" that should prove to him the divine approval, all of which came to pass that day—by Rachel's tomb two men met him and told him the asses were found and his father was anxious about him; by the oak of Tabor three men on their way to sacrifice at Bethel shared their food with him; farther on a band of prophets met him and he prophesied among them, greatly to the surprise of all who knew him.

Definite dates cannot be assigned to Saul's reign. His accession may have been about 1030 B. C.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The name *Gibeah* means Hill, and it was given to various places. "Gibeah of Saul", Saul's home, was in the tribe of Benjamin not far from Ramah, where he met Samuel. For Ramah see the last lesson.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Youth is more responsive to the idea of loyalty than to any other human sentiment, because youth is social and susceptible; but the things it will be loyal to are a matter of training. If youth is not taught that family and country are objects of loyalty it will be in danger of devoting loyalty to objects inimical to family and country. Lack of proper training in this elemental principle is a crying fault of today, and it is a lack which accounts largely for the widespread growth of sportive, wilful, and associative lawlessness.

Thus Captain W. Cecil Price begins his article on "Social Service" in a recent magazine. The means he finds to repair the lack of home-training for youth is the Boy Scout movement. The means which you find is the Sunday School movement, and through this interesting account of a great crisis in the history of Israel you can direct your pupils' loyalty to those in authority and above all to the Supreme Authority, God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

"The asses had run away. They had got out into the road, and nobody knew where they had gone. (Sketch a picture on your board.) So Saul's father said, 'Saul, the asses are lost. Take one of the men with you and go and find

them.' And they went in search, Saul and the hired man. And here they looked, and there they looked, down this way and down that, in the woods and in the fields, but they were nowhere to be found. They hunted for them for three days, in vain." (*Dean Hodges,* in *The Garden of Eden.*)

Tell the rest of the story in dialogue form as much as possible: the conversation between Saul and the hired man about the seer and what he could do, and the present they should take him; next the conversation between Saul and the maidens coming down to the well with earthenware jars on their heads; the meeting with Samuel and the conversation held on the way to the house; then the conversation at the feast between Samuel and his cook, between Samuel and Saul at the table, and then between Samuel and Saul upon the housetop and how it was used (¶ 4, p. 136). Give the conversation between Samuel and Saul the next morning, describe the anointing and the departure of Saul. Show "Samuel Anointing and Blessing Saul", Wilde No. 473.

Give your pupils a vivid account of what happened to Saul after he reached home, his words to his Uncle Abner, his silence about what Samuel had said and done. Describe the meeting of the people which Samuel called, the passing of the tribes, one by one before him, and the choice of the tribe of Benjamin; then the passing of each family, one after the other, and the choice of the family of Kish, and then the passing of the men in the family, and one found wanting. Where was Saul? He was so modest, knowing that he was the one who had been chosen king, that he was in hiding. They found him, and made him stand before all the people. Describe him, tall and good to look upon, and how the people shouted, "God save the King!

Tell why the people had wanted a king. After it was over Saul went back to his ploughing as if nothing had happened. Next week we shall hear what was the first thing he did as king. Call for the Golden Text. Samuel feared God and taught the king and the people to fear him. Explain what it means to fear God. (See ¶ 9, p. 139.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Samuel is now an old man, and his sons have been helping him as judge over the people. These sons, Joel and Abijah, were not so wicked as the sons of Eli had been, but they were not good judges like their father. If an accused man gave them money they would say that the man was innocent of the charge against him, even though they knew him to be guilty. The people came one day to Samuel and told him that his sons did not walk in his ways, and he himself was old, and they wanted a king to rule them, such as other nations had. Think how hard it must have been for Samuel to hear this. What did he do? First he prayed to God about the matter, and God made him know that it was best to yield to the wishes of the people, but that he should solemnly warn them what the result would be. What was one thing that Samuel told them the king would do?

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background, p. 136.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A Great Chance

Saul's Great Opportunity. Saul was endowed by nature with gifts and graces, he was "goodly to look upon", tall and strong and courageous, "every inch a king". He had many admirable qualities. He was a dutiful son, faithful in carrying out his father's order, courteous to Samuel, and modest in his estimate of himself. He was not a braggart: after being anointed by Saul he returned home and told about the finding of the lost animals, but said not a word about the great honor that had come to him. He was a man of great possibilities—a man of promise. That he saw visions and dreamed dreams, Samuel's reference to all that was in his heart shows: he had meditated long upon his country's sad state, had believed that Israel had a great destiny, and had longed to do what he could to further that destiny. Suddenly the chance came. He learned that God had chosen him to be the leader of

his people. What avenues of opportunity opened before him, what power for good, what a chance to build up a new and strong and God-fearing nation! How Saul used his great chance, our succeeding lessons show.

Were the Circumstances Trivial that Brought to Saul the Great Chance? Think of the chain of ordinary events which brought Saul to the little city—the wandering of a drove of asses, the failure to get on their tracks, the accident of being in the land of Benjamin when he got tired of the search, the suggestion of the servant; and behind all these, and working through them, the will and hand of God, thrusting this man, all unconscious, along a path which he knew not. Our own purposes we may know, but God's we do not know. There is something awful in the thought of the issues that may spring from the smallest affairs, and we shall be bewildered and paralyzed if once we get a glimpse of the complicated web which is ever being woven in the loom of time, unless we, too, can, by faith, see the Weaver, and then we shall be at rest. Call nothing trivial, and seek to be conscious of his guiding hand. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *Expositions of Scripture.*

A Great Chance for You. After all, life is but a brief spell of daylight. It will soon be over. Let us use it for the utmost and highest. To build a fortune and make a name will be a poor show when the light of eternity falls on it; but to have helped to lay the foundations of God's gospel where they had never been laid before, to enclose and cultivate some area of the world for Jesus Christ, to sow seeds that, like the corn found in the mummy case, shall bear fruit in other lands and times than ours, *this* will make it worth while to have lived. *F. B. Meyer.*

II Fear God

Obeying Two Kings. A writer in the "Jewish Missionary Intelligencer" tells of a young Russian Jew at Rotterdam, who had just been baptized. He was asked why he wished to go back to Russia for his military duties, since the greater number of the younger generation of Jews in Russian leave the country to avoid military service. He said: "I want to obey two monarchs as a soldier—first, the King Jesus, because in the Russian army there are hundreds of Jews to whom I can preach the Gospel; and secondly, the Czar, my earthly king."

This young Russian observed the commands of our Golden Text. The Israelites had long been taught to fear God. Now they had their first king and with this appointment came another duty as a nation, to honor the king. But Samuel did not fail to impress upon the people that to fear God was the most important of all things. Listen to his words: If ye will fear Jehovah, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of Jehovah your God, well. And again he said, Only fear Jehovah and serve him in truth with all your heart.

Fear God as much as Man. When Rabbi Jochanan died at an advanced age, his pupils who were assembled by his bedside asked him for a blessing. Rabbi Jochanan answered and said, "May it be the will of the Most High that the fear of Heaven be as strong within you as the fear of man!"

"Surely," said his pupils, "You would wish us to fear God more than man!"

"I should be satisfied,' said the dying Rabbi, "if you showed by your deeds that you feared him as much. If we are about to commit evil, do we not cast our eyes this way and that to see that no one is by, and if any one is looking at us, do we not withhold our hands from the wrong way? Show then the same fear of God who always beholds you."

What it Means to Fear God. We speak of being haunted by an air of music. We have listened to some sweet melody, and we can not escape from its gracious thraldom. It pervades the entire day. We hear it in our work and in our leisure; when we retire to rest and when we awake. It haunts us. The analogy may help us to some apprehension of what is meant by the fear of God. The man who fears God is haunted by God's presence. God is an abiding consciousness. God is "continually before him." Everything is seen in relationship to God. The divine Presence pervades the mind and shapes and colors the judgment. Here are two descriptions from the

word of God, in the contrast of which the meaning will be made quite plain. "God is not in all his thoughts." The Eternal does not haunt his mind. Everything is secularized, and nothing is referred to the arbitrament of the divine will. He is not God-possessed. "Pray without ceasing." Here is the contrasted mind from which the sense of God is never absent. Like an air of penetrating music the divine pervades the exercise of all his powers. He is God-haunted, and in the consciousness of that Presence he lives and moves and has his being. He fears God. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *Brooks by the Traveler's Way.*

III Honor the King

The Fear of God no Foe to the Honor of the King. The majority of the educated people of Japan think that the Christian religion is incompatible with the Japanese national spirit. These opponents of the Christian religion claim that Japan is a divine country, and the Imperial House is of heavenly descent, and that therefore Japan is exceptional; and I am not inclined to differ from them in these claims so much as with the conclusions drawn from them. My reading of history has shown me that similar cases were set up by the mythologies of India, Greece, Babylonia, and Egypt. As a Christian I believe that Japan is a divine country. But I also believe that other countries are divine—in fact, that the whole world is divine; and as a Christian I have no difficulty in believing in the heavenly descent of the Japanese Imperial House; but I believe in the heavenly descent of the rulers of other nations, and indeed of all the peoples of the earth. I hold that because the national institutions of Japan are founded upon faith the greatest menace to them is agnostic philosophy, and not a system of teaching which strengthens religious faith. *Mr. Hiromichi Kozaki, Chairman of the Union of Japanese Congregational Churches.*

The "King" stands for the One in Authority. There is a growing tendency among Americans generally, and among newspaper writers in particular, to speak with flippant familiarity of those in authority. Our great men come from the common people; and perhaps it is an unconscious desire to remind them that they are of the same clay as those who are yet at the foot of the ladder of fame that causes the constant free and easy, would-be witty, talk about presidents, governors, judges and other high officials.

As a rule, the poorer the humor the greater the flippancy. Every fourth-rate paragrapher and every barroom wit thinks he adds pungency and point to his remarks by casually referring to the President of the United States as "Grover," or to the governor of the state as the "old man", or to the mayor of the city as "his royal nibs", and so *ad nauseam.*

Apart from the execrable taste shown in this cheap and vulgar kind of foolery, it is worth while to remember that there is truth in the saying that familiarity breeds contempt. In some foreign countries, no doubt, official authority is carried to excess and becomes burdensome; but with us the tendency is the other way—to disregard proper laws and regulations because we have not been trained to respect those who should enforce them.

The calm dignity and courtliness of manner of George Washington are not the gift of all American leaders, but all are entitled to at least courteous treatment. In honoring the man we honor the office and also the people by whom it is bestowed. Thus in the end respect from a democratic people toward those in authority is really nothing more or less than self-respect. *Youth's Companion.*

A Great Financier's Loyalty to Appointed Power. At a club dinner in Boston, the late J. Pierpont Morgan spoke of his father and the period just before the Civil War. His father was a staunch supporter of the government, and when he was dying he gave his son this advice: "Always be true to your country. Next to loyalty to God, make that your supreme endeavor. Be faithful to the government, and in all your transactions see to it that it suffers no detriment at your hands."

"Those were his parting words", said Mr. Morgan, "and I am proud to say that I have never forgotten them, and that in all my dealings it has been my chief endeavor to be faithful to that aim."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The anointing oil of the Lord is upon you as it was upon Saul. You have taken the name of Christian; what have you done today that you would not have done were you not a Christian?

Our Prayer: May we live in the fear of the Lord, endeavoring always to live such a life as is pleasing in thy sight, O God, having thee in thy perfect holiness, perfect wisdom, and perfect love, continually before us. We thank thee for the gift of thy son as King of Kings, to whom we would be ever loyal, honoring and serving him in every way that we can. Make us zealous in doing our King's work, eager to extend his sway over those who either do not know him or do not acknowledge him as their King. And for our own nation we would pray—

"O Lord, our Lord, thy mighty hand
Hath made our country free;
From all this broad and happy land
May worship rise to thee;
Fulfil the promise of her youth,
Her liberty defend;
By law and order, love and truth,
America befriend."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Qualities for leadership which Saul possessed. Qualities needed in those in authority over our country. See "Earning the Right to Lead," *Outlook*, July 22, 1911.

2. Men of today, who like Samuel's sons, are "grafters." Is David Swing right when he makes this assertion: "'The youth says, 'Drinking is a bad habit, but give me another glass'. So our intelligence says, 'All cities should be governed by great men, but for the present bring on your thieves'." See "Graft and Grafting," *American Journal of Sociology*, Jan. 1914; "Where Legislation Comes Cheap," *Harper's Weekly*, March 21, 1914.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What was Nahash's position among the Ammonites? (1 S. 12.12.) 2. Locate the Ammonites, Gilead, Jabesh-gilead and Gibeah. (*Guide*, p. 145.) 3. What was Cincinnatus doing when the Romans came to offer him the dictatorship, according to Livy III. 26? 4. What was Israel Putnam doing when the news of the Battle of Lexington reached him? 5. With Saul's symbolic action compare the sending around of the "Fiery Cross" in Scotland. (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p.143.) 6. How did the men of Jabesh later show their gratitude for Saul's help? (1 S. 31.8-13.) 7. What admirable traits of character does Saul show in this lesson? 8. What other good things are we told about in 1 S. 24.17; 26.21? 9. From what book of the Bible is our Golden Text? 10. What is that Book about?

Questions to think about. 1. Why is Gilead attached to the name of the threatened city? 2. Why did Nahash make that particular condition? (*Guide*, ¶ 6, p. 142, and ¶ 3, p. 144.) 3. Why did Nahash consent to a seven days' respite? 4. What ancient heroes shed tears copiously? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 144.) 5. Our text says that the Spirit of God came upon Saul: what does it mean? 6. Is God present in people's lives now? (Jn. 14.23.) 7. Was Saul's anger, verse 6, evil? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 146.) 8. What does "the dread of Jehovah fell on the people" mean? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 143.) 9. What time is meant by "by the time the sun is hot"? 10. What was the effect of Saul's deliverance of the Jabeshites? 11. Why was Prov. 16.32 chosen for our Golden Text?

Note-Book Work. In your life of Samuel write Part V, Samuel the King-Maker. Begin a Life of Saul and write Part I, Saul Anointed King.

LESSON XI—MARCH 14

SAUL GAINS HIS KINGDOM

Golden Text

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. Proverbs 16.32

LESSON I Samuel 11 MEMORIZE verses 12, 13

1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. 2 And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach upon all Israel. 3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the borders of Israel; and then, if there be none to save us, we will come out to thee. 4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice and wept. 5 And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly. 7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying. Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the dread of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came out as one man. 8 And he numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance. And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. 11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they that remained were scattered, so that not two of them were left together.

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. 13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. 15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Then.* The Septuagint Version reads: And it came to pass after about a month that Nahash, etc.—*Nahash the Ammonite.* The king of the Ammonites, 1 S. 12.12. Nahash later showed kindness to David, 2 S. 10.2. For the country of the Ammonites see the Geographical Background.—*Jabesh-gilead.* Jabesh in Gilead. In the time of Jephthah the Ammonites had claimed part of Gilead.—*Make a covenant with us.* Give us favorable terms, and we will submit. See p. 144.

2. *On this condition.* Literally, at this price.—*That all your right eyes be put out.* Josephus observes that their left eyes would be concealed by their shields, and they would thus be made wholly incapable of warfare. See p. 144. Nahash's brutal answer shows that he is determined to repay the Israelites for their victory under Jephthah over the Ammonites. See *Guide,* p. 94.

3. *We will come out to thee.* We will give ourselves up. To the proposal

for a seven days' respite in order to gain support Nahash assented: he felt sure that no help would come to the Jabeshites, and it suited his haughty mood thus to show his contempt of his foe.

4. *To Gibeah of Saul.* Thus the town of Gibeah was later known. The messengers did not come to Saul; these trans-Jordanic people may not even have heard of his being chosen king.—*All the people lifted up their voice and wept.* The situation was very serious. See p. 144, and the First Topic.

5. *Saul came following the oxen out of the field.* So Gideon had come from the threshing-floor to save Israel, lesson III; so messengers of the senate found Cincinnatus following the plough when they came to offer him the dictatorship; So Israel Putnam was ploughing when news of the Battle of Lexington reached him. Saul had known how to wait for his opportunity to show himself the king.

6. *The Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul.* It was the power of the Spirit of God that impelled Saul to action: there is no stimulant like spiritual inbreathing. See the Second Topic.

7. *He took a yoke of oxen.* It is natural to suppose that they were the oxen with which he had been ploughing.—*Sent them throughout all the borders of Israel.* As had been done in the time of the Judges, Judges 19.29.1—*So shall it be done unto his oxen.* "This was a symbolical action which, by the exhibition of the pieces of the oxen, struck the mind more than words alone would have done" (*Clericus*, quoted by *Lange*). Compare Judges 19.29; 1 K. 11.30, 22.11; 2 K. 13.18. "We may compare the Fiery Cross which used to be sent round as the signal for the gathering of the Highland clans in Scotland. It was 'scathed with flame', and 'quenched in blood' as an emblem of the Fire and Sword awaiting all who should neglect its summons. See The Lady of the Lake, Canto III, Stanzas 8-11" (*Kirkpatrick*).—*By the hands of messengers.* The messengers who had come from Jabesh with the news, verse 4. —*After Saul and after Samuel.* Saul links Samuel's name with his, thus strengthening his cause by referring to the prophet.—*The dread of Jehovah.* Or, *a terror from Jehovah,* RVm. They recognized that Saul was the instrument of Jehovah, and failure to obey his summons would be failure to obey God's will.—*As one man.* The tribes, hitherto divided, unite. "The great man was always as lightning out of heaven, the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they, too, would flame" (*Carlyle*).

8. *Bezek.* See the Geographical Background.—*The children of Israel . . . the men of Judah.* The first instance of the putting of Judah on one side and the rest of the tribes on another.

9. *By the time the sun is hot.* That is, by noon.—*Ye shall have deliverance.* Note their faith.

10. *The men of Jabesh said.* To Nahash the Ammonite. They sought to keep him in ignorance of their expectations.

11. *In three companies.* To surround the enemy, as Gideon had done, lesson IV.—*The morning watch.* In New Testament times the night was divided into four watches, but in Old Testament times into three. From 2 A. M. till sunrise. They took the Ammonites wholly by surprise, while sleeping. Josephus says that he crossed the Jordan and marched his army all night in order to come by day down upon the Ammonite camp. Later the men of Jabesh showed their gratitude for their deliverance by rescuing, at the peril of their lives, the bodies of Saul and his son Jonathan from Philistine insults and by giving them a fitting burial (1 Sam. 31.11-14).

12-14. These verses are understood, on the theory of two accounts of the choice of Saul, as an editorial paragraph added to harmonize the two.—*Who is he that said, shall Saul reign over us?* See the last verse of the preceding chapter. The people, in their enthusiasm for their king, would punish his earlier detractors.—*There shall not a man be put to death this day.* Here we see Saul in an admirable light: he is too great to bear a grudge. See the Third Topic.—*Today Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel.* Humbly he gives all the glory to God.—*Deliverance.* See also 24.17; 26.21. Hebrew, *salvation,* RVm.—*And renew the kingdom.* See 10.25.—*There they made Saul king.* The crisis has not made the man; it has only revealed him so that all the people recognized his fitness for kingship.

15. Saul's success proved himself worthy of kingship. His people themselves had only tears for their distressed brothers at Jabesh, Saul's sympathy led to action: he was quick in making up his mind in the crisis, skilful in arousing the cowardly people to fight, and skilful in his leadership, and his choice as the king made by God through the prophet Samuel and publicly confirmed by the national assembly at Mizpah (10.25) is now ratified by the people. The Septuagint Version adds, "and Samuel anointed Saul there to be king." The anointing recorded in our last lesson was a private one.—*Sacrifices of peace offerings.* Thank-offerings for the deliverance and for the king.—*Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.* "The best bond between authorities and subjects is that they intend to be mutually faithful" (*Cramer*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Make a covenant with us and we will serve thee.* "The Bedouins frequently reduce the towns of the oasis to the condition here in mind, receiving a percentage of all crops. The case of Khaibar when it surrendered to Mohammed is in point. The covenant here asked is evidently imposed by the stronger party, but it naturally binds him to cease from further molestation when it has once been ratified."

2. *On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out.* Such barbarous treatment was a common practice among the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians. Our illustration is from a marble slab found at Khorsabad, and represents Sargon of Assyria holding a prisoner by a thong attached to a ring inserted in his under-lip and thrusting a spear into his eye. Once it was the custom for the Sultan of Turkey on ascending the throne to slay or blind all his half-brothers. It is said that Vambrey (Trails in Central Asia) describes the blinding of prisoners as a regular practice now at Khiva.

Sargon Blinding a Prisoner

4. *All the people lifted up their voices, and wept.* This display of feeling is in accordance with oriental practices throughout the ages. Professor Kirkpatrick reminds us that Achilles, Patrochus and other Homeric heroes shed tears in a way which western nations account utterly unmanly.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How was Gideon engaged when he was called to deliver Israel from her foes? What judge had a good start in life, but failed in the mastery over himself? What was the attitude of the "other worthless fellows" toward Saul after he was made king at Mizpah? What have we heard about the Ammonites?

Saul's Return to his Agricultural Pursuits. Last week we learned that Saul was God's choice for the kingship, and was anointed king by Samuel. Chapter 10 tells us that he was also the people's choice. Samuel called an assembly at Mizpah, and by the sacred lot, as was the custom of the time, the choice of Saul as king was made. Saul returned to his home accompanied by a retinue of men of valor. There were some of the people, however, "worthless

fellows", the writer tells us, who despised Saul and brought him no present. Of this Saul took no notice.

Our lesson today follows naturally that of the last lesson, omitting 1 S. 10. 17-27. Saul had gone back to his home and to his work on his father's farm, to await the occasion suggested by Samuel's words in verse 7—And let it be, that thou do as occasion shall serve thee. The occasion came in the calamity threatened the people of Jabesh by the Ammonite King. Our lesson does not follow naturally the return of Saul in semi-state suggested by 10.26, and this gives force to the view that we have in these chapters two independent narratives. Recall ¶ 3, p. 30.

Palestinian Farmer Carrying His Plow
From a Photograph

Saul Proves himself Worthy of the Kingship. How Saul made use of the opportunity to show himself a king, silenced opposition and gained the support of the whole people we now see. We seem to be still in the time of the judges, and need to remind ourselves that the cry of "God save the king" did not at once create a new state of affairs.

Samuel's Farewell Address. A new era has dawned for the nation, and Samuel, although still the nation's prophet and now the king's counselor, lays down his office as judge in what is called his Farewell Address, chapter XII. He reminds them of the honesty with which he has administered his office, recalls God's mercies, warns them that their future depends upon their attitude toward God, assures them of God's faithfulness and of his own combined interest and intercession for them, and concludes with a reiterated warning.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

East of the Jordan River lived two powerful enemies of the Israelites, the Moabites and the Ammonites. The Moabites were south of the river Arnon, the Ammonites north of that river. The two united in the time of the Judges to attack Israel; after their defeat by Jephthah we hear no more about the Ammonites until Nahash threatened Jabesh-gilead.

Gilead was the territory of the Israelites east of the Jordan on the north and west of the Ammonites and south of Bashan. The southern portion of their territory was claimed by the Ammonites, and could they have captured Jabesh, its capital, they would have made themselves masters soon of all Gilead. The name of Jabesh is preserved in the name of the Wady Yabis, which falls into the Jordan from the east nine miles south of Bethshean. The site of the town is uncertain, but by some it is identified with Ed-Deir, on the Wady Yabis, which corresponds to the location given it by Eusebius.

For Gibeah see p. 137. Bezek has been identified with Ibzik, about halfway between Shechem and Bethshean. For Gilgal see p. 129. As there stated, there were many Gilgals in Canaan, and it is thought probable that this was not the most famous one near Jericho, but the village now called Jiljiliyeh, seven miles north of Bethel.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

This lesson can be made very graphic. The Golden Text can be explained and applied to verses 12-13, but its application to this lesson is not very patent for little people. I would counsel postponing this lesson truth until the fifth Lesson of the next Quarter, and today emphasizing the thought that if we see people in trouble we should do something for them, contrasting the way the people of Gibeah wept at the thought of the dreadful fate awaiting their friends in Jabesh, but did not think of doing anything for them, and the way that Saul at once went to work to save them from this fate. This is the lesson that the Boy Scouts learn, and in the things which the younger boys find to do for others you can make the thought practical for your pupils. For instance,

this morning's paper tells of seventy-five Boy Scouts in Brooklyn who led seventy-five blind boys to a lecture and then led them safely back to their school again. They could not help the blindness of these boys, but they could be sorry for them and do something for them. Tell abut two little girls who were sorry for a sparrow that spent every night during the cold winter on the iron rest which held the blind by their window. Alice was so afraid the little bird would freeze its foot on that cold iron rest, and so afraid that it would starve to death, that she cried over it. Edith was sorry, too, and she wound a piece of worsted around the iron bar to make it warmer, and put some crumbs every day on the window sill. If you were that bird, whose sympathy would you think the truer?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. How did Saul live after his return from the meeting with Samuel and his anointing as king? He had not yet been accepted by all the people as their king, so he went quietly back to his farm work with oxen and plow and waited for a good opportunity to show the people that he was a capable king. Though king in name he would be recognized as king in ability, and then everybody would gladly obey him. What was the opportunity which came? How did Saul show himself a king?

For Older Pupils. You remember how Roderick, in the "Lady of the Lake," gives the shrill whistle through the copse and heath which summons his men before the face of Fitz James:—

That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.

So the time came when Saul surprised the Ammonites with an unexpectedly large force of men. How did he summon them? Why?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Working versus Weeping

Saul and the Rest of the Gibeahites. Messages came to Gibeah with the terrible news that all of the men over in Jabesh-gilead were to have their right eyes put out, Nabash had said so, and besides all the cruelty of it, how the Ammonites would gloat over the disgrace inflicted and the constant reminder to every one that the Israelites were utterly in their power! The subjection of Jabesh would lead to a ready subjection of other cities, and before long all Israel might be but the slaves of the Ammonites. No wonder all the people of Gibeah were sore distressed. They lifted up their voices and wept—all save one man. Saul appreciated the horror of it all, and the probable consequences, as well as did they, but for him that was no time to weep, it was a time to act. Which showed better their sympathy for the stricken city?

A Weeper. In "Self Control and How to Secure It," Dr. Paul Dubois counsels us to "submit our pity to the criticism of reason" before we credit ourselves with sympathy. A patient said to him once:

"Doctor, I suffered greatly when I heard of the catastrophe in Martinique. I am so susceptible to the misfortune of others that I ought to give up reading that sort of news."

"And," said Doctor Dubois, "you think you are expressing an altruistic sentiment by it."

"Certainly. What else could it be?"

"Pardon me, but it was nothing but intense fear. You have a constant dread of death, are alarmed at the smallest indispositions. The tale of this misfortune merely awakened your terror by reminding you of the frailty of human existence, above all, of your own. I don't believe that you have given a sou to the victims of this cataclysm."

"That's a fact," he replied smiling. "I never thought of it."

To be healthy, pity should be useful, should broaden us, and suggest promptly the means to succor those who are in trouble.

A Worker. I saw a student carrying a heavy valise to the station. I

had started to read my Bible, but somehow I couldn't fasten my attention on the book. I could see before me as I read that young man trudging along with that heavy valise. Perhaps he had given the quarter that it would cost him to ride to the station in the collection taken up at my request the day previous. Yes, and he had nearly two miles to walk. Surely that box must be heavy! I couldn't stand it any longer. I went to the barn and hurriedly had my horse hitched up, overtook the young man, and carried him and his baggage to the station. When I returned to the house I had no further difficulty in fixing my attention on the book I was studying. *Dwight L. Moody.*

II The Spirit of God came upon Saul

God Entered into Partnership with Saul. There are many medieval legends about men with whom the powers of evil have entered into partnership. You recall the story of Faust. Such stories represent the evil spirit as possessing and controlling men who have given them entrance into their soul. They are legends, but they represent what sometimes seems to be the dreadful reality. On the other hand, the Bible throughout teaches the glorious possibility of the Power of goodness entering a man's soul and possessing and controlling him. God will enter into partnership with him, if he will yield himself to his controlling influence. Just as a great general "inspires" his soldiers, puts his own spirit of hope and courage and perseverance into them, so the Divine Spirit inspires his followers who put themselves under his influence.

The Spirit of God is Dynamic Power. "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you," what kind of power did he mean? What difference would it make? What kind of dynamic does the Holy Ghost bring to men? The only way to answer that question is to see what difference it did make. In the Acts of the Apostles we find, first, that men who receive the power of the Holy Ghost are gifted with an extraordinary power of spiritual apprehension, It is as if the soul were endowed with exquisite tendrils, and these tendrils were constantly reaching out to feel God.

Again, when the Apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit they were distinguished by a magnificent force of character. In the early days they were timorous, they were pliable, they were unfaithful, and in a supreme crisis they deserted their Master by flight. But when they received the power of the Holy Spirit, what happened? These men became steady, positive, effective.

And they had not only light but heat—the fire of a quenchless enthusiasm—from which every other faculty and power gets its strength. It was like the furnace fire of a great liner driven by its aid through the fury of the tempest. "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard," said they. "We must obey God rather than men." There is driving power. These men were burning and shining lights; they had not only knowledge but zeal. They had force of character.

Again, when the Holy Spirit came upon them they received the energy of a glorious optimism. If you read of the early days of the disciples you cannot call them children of hope; they were rather children of the cloudy day. But when they received the power of the Holy Spirit what happened? When oppositions began to abound, and threatenings were hurtling through the air, and when imprisonment and death came near, what happened? There was no despair, no disheartenment, no moaning. They were optimists then.

What happened to these Apostles, when the Holy Spirit came upon them, can happen to you and to me. Not one of the promises has been revoked. If we all had the power of the Spirit in us, what a difference it would make! *Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

The Spirit of God may be in us. Christ is God visible to man; God expressed in the form, speaking the language, doing the work of a human life. The Holy Spirit is God visible in man. The great word of a working theology is power; its gospel that the weakness of man may assimilate the strength of God; that in every struggle of the soul outward and upward, the infinite resources of the universe may be his. *Alexander MacCall,* in *A Working Theology.*

How Strong is the Spirit of God in You? A class of Sunday-school girls had a composite photograph made of themselves. When they saw the pic-

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ture they were surprised and delighted. From their talk about it given in the *Youth's Companion,* I condense these thoughtful words,

"Why-y," said Elizabeth, slowly, "it's more beautiful, more spiritual, than any of us!"

Their teacher looked pleased. "I am glad," she said, that you have discovered for yourselves the fact that this composite picture is more ideal than any single face that has gone into the making of it. To me there is something very significant in that. You know that it is through agreements alone that you can make it a composite picture. Every feature that does not agree with other features leaves so slight an impression on the plate that it cannot be seen. But every feature that is common to many faces will be clear and positive. Do you see what that means?"

There was a moment's silence, and then Louise Barton said, "It means that there is something fine in each one of us, no matter how mean and selfish we are."

"Wouldn't it be awful," mused Betty Ripley, "to think that there wasn't a single one of your features in that photograph?"

"But wouldn't it be fine," said Miss Frevert, "to combine in your face all the finest lines, and in your character all the finest traits that are to be found in humanity?"

"But nobody could do that!" exclaimed several.

"I once heard a very eminent man speak of Frances Willard as the 'composite photograph of her countrymen,'" said Miss Frevert. "'That was the secret of her matchless power,' he said."

"If we should have another one taken in a year or two," thoughtfully observed Louise, "I wonder whether or not it would be more nearly ideal? It ought to be."

III Magnanimity

Saul's Self-Control and Magnanimity. Certain worthless fellows had treated Saul upon being chosen king, with supreme contempt. How can this man save us? they asked. Saul showed splendid self-control at this time; he paid no attention to them or their remarks. He was as though he had been deaf, so reads the margin of this Bible passage. Now when Saul was enthusiastically received as king, he had only to say "Yes" to his followers who were eager to punish these contemptuous, rebellious subjects and they would have been at once put to death. But Saul evinced kingly clemency and magnanimity: he would not have the joyous occasion marred by any vengeance. It was a time for giving to God the glory, not a time for wreaking vengeance. Saul is known in history as the man who failed to control himself; our later lessons show how he deserves this estimate. But in these first two lessons we see only his splendid qualities, his dutifulness, humility, courteousness, his valor, promptness to act, wonderful leadership, military skill, and self-control. He did not take a city, though he freed one. He was not slow to anger when the news of the atrocious condition made to his kinsmen by Nahash reached him; rather did his anger kindle mightily, and it was righteous anger, the sort of anger of which Christ approved and which he evinced when he found the Holy Temple desecrated; but he controlled himself and was nobly slow to anger when he was treated contemptuously, and again when he had his backbiters in his power.

Arlo Bates tells us that

> Who wears a crown must fear to see
> Both crown and kingdom slip away:
> Who rules himself a king shall be,
> Secure unto his dying day.

If Saul had only ruled himself throughout his reign as king, how different had been his life! He would have been more than a king, as Milton says: He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires and fears, is more than a king.

Lincoln's Magnanimity. The religion of Lincoln is manifest through his magnanimity. Early he registered a vow that come what would he would keep faith with friend and foe alike. He was true as steel with his generals, and faithful unto death with his opponents as well as his supporters. His gener-

osity was all but sublime. Douglas insulted Lincoln, but Lincoln gave Douglas a position of honor at his inaugural. Wendell Phillips called Lincoln the "slave hound of Illinois," when the first contest was on, but Lincoln publicly thanked Phillips for his work for abolition. In a suit in Cincinnati, for the McCormick Reaper Company, Edwin Stanton opposed Lincoln and humiliated him grievously, but Lincoln forgave and forgot, and made Stanton Secretary of War. Chase was stung by his defeat and Lincoln's success in the race for nomination. Chase was a man of superb presence and elegant manners. He criticized Lincoln when nominated, patronized him in the White House, and plotted to wrest the nomination from him in 1864; yet, having received nothing but stones, Lincoln made Chase chief justice, and poor Chase was so bewildered that he wrote to a friend, "I cannot understand this man". It was literally true. No second-rate man ever can understand a man of real genius. Mediocrity is always afraid of superiority, and "cannot understand". *Dr. Hillis.*

The Noblest Self-Defense. "Do you think it would be wrong for me to learn the noble art of self-defence?" a young man inquired of a venerable teacher. "Certainly not", was the answer, "I learned it in youth myself, and I have found it of great value throughout my life."

"Indeed, sir, what system did you learn?"

"I learned Solomon's system."

"Solomon's system?"

"Yes, you will find it laid down in the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of Proverbs; A soft answer turneth away wrath. It is the best system of self-defence I have ever heard."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

More dear in the sight of God than any other conquest is the conquest of self. To be king in our own life is better than to rule a city or govern a nation.

Our Prayer: Thou, O God, art Spirit, and we, too, are spirit. O wonderful thought, that thou and we are kin! Thy Spirit came mightily upon Saul and empowered him for a great deed. O Thou Spirit of the Father and the Son who dost dwell within us, take full control of our lives and make us interpreters of thy will, doers of thy deeds. Grant us a mind forgetful of past ill-will. In Christ's name we ask it.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. True Sympathy. See the First Topic.
2. The Indwelling Spirit. See the Second Topic. See "The Spiritual Life," *Outlook,* March 4, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What does the thirteenth chapter of 1 Samuel say about Saul? 2. What does the Bible tell about the Philistine peril and the equipment of the Israelites? 3. What was the ephod? (*Guide,* p. 152.) 4. What words of Jonathan's show that he was not relying upon his own strength? 5. How did Joshua and Caleb assert that numbers were not necessary in waging God's battles? (Num. 13.25—14.10.) 6. What is said about Jonathan in 2 S. 1.23? 7. Describe the Battle of Michmash. 8. Tell the story of Jonathan's innocent disobedience to his father's command and the result. (1 S. 12.24-46.)

Questions to think about. 1. Which verses are parenthetical, interrupting the narrative? 2. Was Jonathan's an act of presumption or of faith? (Verse 6 and *Guide* ¶ 3, p. 153.) 3. What is the meaning of "There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few"? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 151.) 4. Explain how the answer of the Philistines (verses 9 and 10) would help Jonathan in determining what to do. (*Guide,* p. 151.) 5-6. What did the Philistines mean by what they said, verse 12? (*Guide,* p. 151.) What was the attitude of the Philistines toward Jonathan and his armor bearer? 7. How can the failure of the Philistines to resist the two men be explained? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 151.) 8. What fine qualities does Jonathan show in this account?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Saul write II, Gaining his Kingdom.

JONATHAN AND HIS ARMORBEARER

Golden Text

Let us put on the armor of light. Romans 13.12

LESSON I Samuel 14.1-46: verses 1-13
printed MEMORIZE verse 7

1 Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side. But he told not his father. 2 And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate-tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; 3 and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. 4 And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. 7 And his armorbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee, behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. 8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and we will disclose ourselves unto them. 9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. 10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up; for Jehovah hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. 11 And both of them disclosed themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. 12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me: for Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. 13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armorbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew them after him.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The young man that bare his armor.* Gideon seems to have had such an armor-bearer (Judges 9.54; 7.10), a trusted attendant.—*Let us go over.* Across the chasm which separated the camp of the Israelites from that of the Philistines.—*The Philistines' garrison.* At Michmash, last verse.—*He told not his father.* He knew that his father would think the undertaking too hazardous, but he felt justified in the undertaking because of the gravity of the peril into which his country had fallen and which he had brought to a crisis by his attack upon Geba (1 S. 13.3), and also because he was relying upon the help of Jehovah, verse 6.

2. *In the uttermost part of.* In the outskirts of; at the extreme northern end of.—*In Migron.* Various suggestions have been given by scholars for the meaning of this proper name—threshing-floor, precipice, cliff.—*The people that were with him.* His bodyguard.

3. *Ahijah . . . Eli.* Therefore, the great grandson of Eli.—*The son of Ahitub.* Ahijah and Ahimelech are synonymous names, we are told, and therefore he may have been the Ahimelech mentioned in the later history. The title "the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh" probably belongs here to Eli, not to Ahijah, for Shiloh is not spoken of as an important religious center after the disaster of Aphek.—*Wearing an ephod.* The high priest's shoulder-dress, upon which was fastened the Urim and Thummim. See p. 152. Thus Ahijah was always present so that the king could consult the oracle, as he did later.

4. *And between the passes.* Doubtless there were side-wadies which entered the main pass from the south-west and north-west, and between them, on the north and south walls of the deep valley, were the two great rocks. Robinson describes two hills of a conical form, having steep rocky sides, with small wadies running up behind so as almost to isolate them. See the Geographical Background.—*Seneh.* "The word has been transferred from Arabic to English in the name of the medicinal senna" (*Smith*).

6. This verse follows verse 1, the intervening verses being parenthetical and giving particulars of the situation.—*These uncircumcised.* Non-Israelites. "The thought would add fuel to faith and courage—circumcision being the rite by which the Hebrews were distinctively marked as a people separated to God. This term of reproach is applied especially to the Philistines. Jonathan's faith was based on Israel's covenant-relation to Jehovah; he also reflected that the Philistines had no such privilege" (*Wood*).—*There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.* Jehovah is not limited, he is not dependent upon his human helpers, he will have no difficulty in saving either with many or with few. Recall Gideon's three hundred.

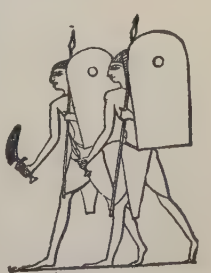
7-8. *Do . . . to thy heart.* The Greek version reads: "Do all to which thine heart inclines; behold, I am with thee, as thy heart so is my heart."—*We will disclose ourselves unto them.* By approaching in the ravine below the Philistine garrison.

9-10. *If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you . . . But if they say thus, Come up unto us.* Jonathan believed that the answer would be ordered by Jehovah. "We will come to you" was a threat of resolution: "Come you to us" was a challenge of fear, says Bishop Hall and in this view Delitzsch concurs. But the Philistines had so frightened the Israelites that they were in hiding, and it is not at all likely that the Philistines were afraid: rather is Lange right in his observation that in the first case they would show themselves courageous and prepared; and in the second, that they were carelessly secure.—*This shall be the sign unto us.* The sign of God's will. "The heart of man, in its first venture on the way of faith, eagerly longs for some sign that it is not following a will-o'-the-wisp, or being misled by wreckers' lights" (*Meyer*).

11. *The holes.* See 1 S. 13.6; Judges 6.2; 15.8.

12. *Come up to us and we will show you a thing.* The rock was steep, they may not have thought it possible for the two men to climb it, and certainly they did not think that two men would dare to attack a garrison, so they ridiculed them.

13. *And Jonathan climbed up.* He was swifter than an eagle and stronger than a lion (2 S. 1.23). "He could plant his claws in the crags and force his way into the enemy's lair".—*Upon his hands and upon his feet.* Compare the attack upon Edinburgh Castle, ¶ 2, p. 155, and upon Quebec, ¶ 6, p. 155.—*They fell before Jonathan.* Evidently they had set no watch or else the two men were hidden from their view while climbing the cliff, and therefore they were surprised by the sudden attack.—*His armorbearer slew them after him.* He finished what Jonathan began. "Their terror and flight are perfectly conceivable, if we consider that the outpost of the Philistines was so stationed upon the top of the ridge of the steep mountain wall that they could not see how many were following" (*Delitzsch*). For an account of the battle, see p. 153, and for Saul's vow, p. 153.



Egyptian Armorbearers

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIGHT

3. *And Ahijah, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing an ephod.* The presence of the high priest is noted, and the fact that he was wearing the ephod is especially mentioned, to record the fact that he was at hand to give the divine sanction or refusal of the king's plans through the oracle. See 1 S. 14.36-42. The means by which this oracle of the Urim and Thummim was consulted is not known. In some mysterious way, through it, God revealed his will to Israel. The only plausible explanation I have ever seen is given by

Benjamin Weiss in his book entitled "A Christian Jew on the Old Testament." Condensed and slightly re-written, his account is as follows:—

The white linen habiliments of the priests signified purity and sanctity. They consisted of a coat, a girdle, and bonnet, and were common to both priest and high priest. There were several other garments peculiar to the high priest, when engaged in his holy office, especially when he had to enter into the Most Holy Place, on the Day of Atonement. The high priest first put on a long robe, which was called "the Robe of the Ephod". This vestment was of blue, and woven of one piece. At the bottom were fringes and bells. It was tied round with a girdle. Over it was put on another short coat, called "Ephod", which extended to the girdle, and had a square aperture over the breast. Into this aperture was placed a most wonderful piece of ornament.

High Priest Wearing the Ephod

This ornament was "the breastplate of judgment". Into the front of this breastplate four rows of precious stones were inserted; each of these rows had three stones, making twelve in all, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. On these stones the twelve names of the tribes of Israel were graven, one name upon each stone.

The front of this breastplate was not very thick and the breastplate itself was empty within. Into the inside of the breastplate the Lord commanded Moses to put the Urim and Thummim. The Hebrew word Urim signifies "lights" or "illuminators". It was no more than a lamp with twelve lights, put into the breastplate. Within, each light was directed towards one of the precious stones, by which means the brilliancy and lustre of the gems were heightened to a great degree. But all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet did not occur in the twelve names on the breastplate—four were wanting. To supply this defect Moses was directed to make another stone with these four letters on it. This stone was called "Thummim", which signifies, "the completers", or, "the perfecters"; they perfected the oracle for the purpose of giving answers. The Urim, or illuminating lights, were supplied with holy oil.

The way in which revelations were made by this oracle may be explained. When the record says that a tribe was "taken", it means that the stone containing the name of the tribe was darkened. For a family the right letters in the tribal stones and in the Thummim were darkened. According to the documents whence we have drawn this information, this oracle ceased to answer after the death of David. Afterwards there was no other means of receiving instructions than by the prophets.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the first judge to deliver the people from the Philistines? (Judges 3.31.) What judge delivered his people from them together with the Ammonites? What later judge "began to destroy" the Philistines? What have you heard about this enemy in the time of Eli? What did they capture from the Israelites? How did Gideon show great bravery? How did Ruth? The boy Samuel? Saul? Did what Ruth and the boy Samuel did require as much courage as the deeds of Gideon and Saul? What judge of Israel proved that God can save by few as well as by many, and how did he prove it? How did that judge seek an omen from the conduct of the enemy?

The Philistine Peril. Saul had come to the kingdom in a time of national danger, and it was his own tribe of Benjamin that was in the greatest peril, for the Philistines had occupied the heights of Gibeah and Gebah and Ramah, and the passes of Beth-horan and Michmash. His first duty was to drive

the enemy back to their own land along the Mediterranean coast. For a similar task each of the ancient judges had been "raised up." The ascendancy of the Philistines is vividly shown in these words: There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears; but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and with Jonathan his son were they found.

Saul's Disobedience. On his first opportunity Saul had proved himself a king, a courageous and skilful leader, delivering Jabesh-gilead from the Ammorites. But the first time his obedience to the divine will was put to the test, he failed. Samuel, the prophet, God's messenger, had charged him not to engage in the campaign against the Philistines till he arrived to offer sacrifices. "I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and show thee what thou shalt do." Saul waited until the seventh day, and then, because the people had begun to scatter, he offered sacrifices himself. As king he had this right, but for this act of disobedience, Samuel declared that his kingdom should not continue forever. (This may be another version of that rejection of Saul which is the first lesson of next quarter. The two, though different, have much in common.)

The Battle of Michmash. It was Jonathan, Saul's son, who struck the first blow in the war for freedom. After the return of the Israelites from their rout of the Ammorites (our last lesson) Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison at Geba, and thus caused the Philistines to assemble for war. A great multitude encamped at Michmash. Dividing into three companies, they began to plunder the country. The terrified Israelites took to their caves and pits, and some fled across the Jordan. Of the three thousand men that Saul had summoned, only six hundred "trembling men" were left. His kingdom was on the brink of destruction. It was at this critical moment that Jonathan, strong in the faith that Jehovah was with him, accompanied only by his armorbearer, daringly surprised the Philistines on the heights of Michmash. The prowess of the two young men was aided by an earthquake which increased the panic into which the enemy was thrown. The Israelites whom they were holding as slaves mutinied; those who were hid in the caverns of the neighborhood and Saul and his followers from their distant height of Gibeah, saw the commotion and all rushed to the pursuit of the enemy. Down the rocky defile of Beth-horon, down into the valley of Aijalon they drove the Philistines and routed them so completely that they were kept at bay until the close of Saul's reign. The Septuagint Version calls it all "the Battle of Michmash" where Jehovah saved not by many but by few.

Saul's Vow. In the days of Jephthah the judge the people had not restrained him from carrying out his vow which involved the taking of his innocent daughter's life; now, however, the people restrain Saul from sacrificing his son because of his vow. In the midst of the battle Saul had declared a fast until evening, and had invoked a solemn curse on any one who should disobey. Jonathan was ignorant of this, and he tasted the wild honey which he found in the forest. When Saul learned this, he prepared to put Jonathan to death, but the people interposed and rescued Jonathan, for they justly ascribed the victory to him, "he hath wrought with God this day."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The central mountain chain which extends north and south across Canaan is broken by the Great Plain of Esdraelon. South of that Plain it is broken by many deep valleys or passes. There was a regular route of trade across this range South of Bethel, which crosses from the Jordan to the Mediterranean: on the east the pass that leads up from the Jordan was called the Gorge of Michmash; and on the west the pass that leads down to the seacoast was called the Vale of Aijalon. On the southern side of this deep pass was Geba; opposite on the northern side of the pass, the Philistines were encamped at

Michmash. There was a sharp rock on the South, now more rounded, called Seneh, and another one on the north, called Bozez.

Saul and his trembling six hundred were encamped at Gibeah, which was back of Geba, about an hour and a quarter's distance towards the south. Yet on the northern extremity—evidently the Migron—where Saul was encamped, he was not so far away that he could not see the commotion in the Philistine ranks across the pass at Michmash.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

What is my counsel? Choose a hero. Then
Make him your study—temper, brain and nerve,
Till he has grown your stronger self. And when
Weak, morbid impulse comes on you to swerve
From the sane path, his grafted strength shall serve,
To keep you true to God, your soul, and men.

Edward Cracroft Lefroy.

It will be easy so to teach this lesson that your pupils will choose Jonathan as their hero. Then they will be ready for two later lessons (V and VI of next quarter) in which other qualities of Jonathan are shown which will help to keep them true to God and men.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Saul was now king and his wife, Ahinoam, was queen. They had a fine family of boys and girls—three boys and two girls. The oldest boy was named Jonathan and he was a brave yet modest youth. Now it fell upon a day—. Study the Historical Background. Tell the story vividly; picture Jonathan alone, wondering if God would not save his people through him, ready to give up his life for his country; give in dialogue form his talk with his armor-bearer, describe the dangerous cliffs, with no pathway down them and the approach across the open plain; give the dialogue between Jonathan and the Philistines; make very real the difficulties of the climb up the opposite cliff; tell the result in few words. Throughout the story let your pupils see the bravery and the faith of Jonathan.

Then talk about the ways in which your pupils can be brave. All boys and girls want to be brave; get your boys to express a wish to be brave like Jonathan (and your girls to be brave like Grace Darling, after telling her story). Tell them that the best way to be brave when a great chance comes is to be brave all the time, and that little folks are often brave when they don't know it. Is it brave to endure a hurt without crying? To keep back an angry word? To do something for others when you want to play instead? I have read about a five-year-old boy who lost his balance at the top of a back-stairs—a long, steep flight, and tumbled down, from top to bottom. The other boys and girls with him screamed and of course his mother came running to see what had happened. The little fellow picked himself up and looking back at his mother, said cheerily, "That was quite a fall, wasn't it?" Another day someone slammed the door and caught his thumb. You know how that hurts! The poor thumb was bruised so badly that the nail came off, but although he couldn't keep his lip from quivering, he didn't cry and all he said was "That was my thumb!" as he held it up to view.

In olden days men going to battle used to put on armor which could not be cut through by swords. This made them braver, because they knew that with it they were safer from harm. Explain our Golden Text as meaning the putting ourselves under the protecting care of God, asking him to help us to be brave and to keep us from harm.

SUGGESTION FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you know the story of Paul Revere's Ride, as Longfellow records it? In what year was it? Where were the British? Did any one know what the British were going to do? What discovery did Paul Revere make? What could he not learn? Where did he arrange that a friend of his should watch that night? How was that friend to signal which

way the British went? What was he doing meanwhile? What did he do when the signal came? How does the poem close? If the opportunity came, would you like to do something glorious like that? Did Paul Revere's nameless friend deserve some of the credit? Was it an easy task to watch that night in the belfry of the North Church and give the signal? It was long ago that Jonathan and his nameless armor-bearer in an hour of darkness and peril and need, saved their nation and put a whole army to flight, but their deed is far more daring and thrilling than that of Paul Revere and his friend.

For Older Pupils. Visitors to Edinburgh Castle are told by the guard there that the castle has never been captured but once. Then they go to the most precipitous side of the big rock on which the castle stands, and there the place is pointed out where a brave company of men climbed up one night, "tooth and nail, hand and foot", by projecting rock and slender bush, up over an ascent so steep that the guard had not thought it possible any one would be rash enough to attempt the climb. Thus, these brave men surprised the guard and took the castle. They did just what Jonathan and his armor-bearer did so long ago. Who was Jonathan? What height did he scale? Against what enemy?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Military Heroes

The Capture of Michmash. This is one of the bravest things ever done by a soldier. Jonathan was down here in the valley with his armor-bearer; up there on the top of the rock that towered over him was a garrison of his enemies. If the two men had been on the rock and all the band of their foes in the ravine below, it would have been difficult, perhaps impossible, for the many to capture the fort with the two defending it. A few men rolling stones down the steep slope, or casting spears, could have kept an army at bay, and yet these two climbed up the steep face of rock and conquered the whole garrison.

I have seen a picture of the rocks up which Jonathan climbed, and they rise from the valley so steeply as to be quite a precipice. They are just a great wall, up which it looks as though no one would ever be able to find a way to the top. That seems to be what the Philistines thought, for they called out to Jonathan, evidently making fun of him, "Come up to us, and we'll show you something." So certain did they feel that the rock could not be climbed, that they took no trouble about setting a watch, and only knew that Jonathan had got up when he was in their midst slaying them. Yet in a place so difficult, by putting his heart into it, getting a footing here on some narrow ledge, clinging there to a jutting bit of stone, he got up step by step until he stood, out of breath but safe, on the top.

"And his armorbearer after him." He was a young man, probably not more than a lad. It isn't likely he would ever have dreamed of going up alone. If he had been climbing in front, very possibly he would have lost heart and given up, or made some slip and got hurt. How much easier for him to face the cliff when Jonathan was in front of him all the time! If we had been watching, no doubt we should have seen him put his feet where his master's had been, and lay hold of the bits of rock that Jonathan had shown were safe. So because of the one who went before him he was able to scale the fortress. *Condensed* from *Measuring Sunshine,* by *Frank Smith.*

The Capture of Quebec. Of course you know how General Wolfe captured Quebec. It was in 1759 that it happened. This is the way your school history tells the story.

General Wolfe had a feeble body but a fearless soul. Pitt believed in this brave young general, and therefore placed him at the head of an army of 10,000 men for the capture of Quebec. The men so idolized Wolfe that they would gladly follow him to victory or death.

Quebec was situated on steep and lofty cliffs overlooking the St. Lawrence, and was protected by a strong fortress. This fortress was the strongest in America, and the key to Canada. Wolfe and his army tried in vain for three months to find a weak spot where they might make a successful attack, but failure met them on every hand. The English troops were discouraged, and

even the brave Wolfe began to lose hope, but in spite of sickness and intense bodily suffering he resolved to make one more attempt to take Quebec.

At last his searching eyes caught sight of a pathway up the rugged sides of the cliffs along the river bank, some distance above the city. Here was an opportunity not to be neglected. One dark night Wolfe's army floated quietly down the river in boats, and landed at the foot of the rocky heights. The brave soldiers, with immense difficulty, pulled themselves and their cannon up the steep ascent. Reaching the top they quickly overpowered the guard, which was too much astonished to make resistance. In the morning, Wolfe's men were drawn up in line of battle on the plains of Abraham, less than a mile from the walls of Quebec. Montcalm, astonished at what the English had done, would not wait for an attack, but at once led his army out on the open plain. The fighting was terrible, and the French could not stand up against the withering fire of the English. Wolfe led in a furious charge and, although twice pierced with bullets, refused to give up until he received a mortal wound. It was hard for him to die as long as the issue was in doubt, but when, in his last moments, he heard the shout of victory, he said "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace".

II Christian Heroes

Let us put on the Armor of Light. These words of Paul to the Romans, our Golden Text, tell us how to be Christian heroes. To them let us add Paul's words to the Ephesians: Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might, put on the whole armor of God (6.10-11), and to the Thessalonians: Putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

The armor of light, or the whole armor of God, is the only panoply that makes one invulnerable to evil. Dr. W. L. Watkinson tells what happened once to a diver in the depths when his hand was suddenly seized by the tentacle of a gigantic octopus. Fortunately, with his other hand the man was able to transmit the danger signal to his companions above, who immediately raised him. On the diver's emerging from the water, they were horrified to see that his armor was almost entirely enveloped in the slimy fold of the frightful devil-fish, which only relaxed its grasp when hewed to pieces by axes. How that submerged explorer in the awful embrace of the sea-monster would bless the brazen panoply in which he was encased, and which ensured salvation!

Brave Soldiers of the Cross. A beautiful story told by Mr. William T. Ellis in his book, "Men and Missions," is the one often told about what followed when news came one day to the reigning Roman emperor that his gladiators, forty in all, had accepted Christ, and had made profession of their faith in him as their Saviour.

The enraged emperor immediately gave orders that these men be required to recant; refusing to do so, they were to be transported to the loneliest spot in all the Alpine country of northern Italy, and there, without food or shelter, turned out to die. The message was carried to the gladiators, and to a man they refused to disown their Saviour. The Emperor's order was carried out.

That night, as the officer of the guard lay in his tent, he was aroused by a chant that was borne in to him upon the night winds. Listening, he heard: "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Christ, ask of him the victory and claim from him the crown."

He sat up and listened again. Borne to his ears more distinctly came the words: "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Christ, ask of him the victory, and claim from him the crown."

He began to think about the devotion of these men to their Leader. He knew something of the loyalty of a Roman soldier to the empire, but he realized that the breast of no Roman soldier ever knew a devotion like this. As he marveled, a poor wretch came stumbling through the flap of his tent, fell on his knees and begged permission to recant.

The officer looked down on him, and said: "Art thou the only one of thy number that durst ask this?"

"The only one."

Tearing off his cloak, the Roman officer threw it over the shivering wretch. "Then I will have thy place," he said, and went out into the night.

And the chant again arose: "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Christ, ask of him the victory, and claim for him the crown."

III Contempt of Others

The Attitude of the Philistines. "Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid", said the Philistines, contemptuously, as they saw Jonathan and his armor-bearer approaching. Secure in their stronghold, made confident by their long-continued power over the Israelites, those Philistines little thought that they could be put to rout by the two men whom they were regarding with such contempt. "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing or two," they cried out with mocking voices, and then they seemed to have "turned in" and gone to sleep, and the next thing they knew they were being attacked and killed or put to flight by those two daring Israelites.

What Other Contemptuous Enemies of the Israelites had Learned. When the spies brought back their report to Canaan, they told about the Anakim and said that in the sight of these giants, as they called them, they themselves were as grasshoppers. Perhaps it was their own cowardice which made them attribute this scornful thought to the Anakim, but if the latter really thought of the Israelites thus contemptuously, they found out their mistake when later the Israelites attacked them. The dreamer in the camp of the Midianites saw Gideon as a cake of barley bread, the poorest and meanest of enemies, but his comrade truly told him that into Gideon's hand God had delivered Midian.

How Henry Ward Beecher was Taught a Good Lesson. A writer in the *Congregationalist* reports a story which he often heard his mother tell of Henry Ward Beecher:—

When the great preacher was a student at Amherst College he rode over one day on a prancing steed to Northampton, flushed with all the pomp of a gay, successful student who has just received a remittance from home. At the end of the Hadley Bridge he was met by a veteran toll-keeper with an outstretched and expectant hand. Young Beecher whipped a half-dollar out from his trousers and flung it into the dust at his horse's feet.

"There, my good man," he blustered out, "take out the toll."

Carefully the "good man" stooped to the dirt, carefully made the appropriate change, carefully laid the nickels and coppers back into the dust at that horse's feet.

The college lad, crimson with anger, his whip lifted to urge his steed along, gazed sadly down at the money, reflected that he couldn't afford to lose forty-eight cents, and dropped off from his saddle in front of the grinning toll-collecter.

As Mr. Beecher lifted his flaming face from the highway, he turned to the man and courteously doffed his hat.

"Sir," he cried, "I beg your pardon. I was in the wrong."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Fight the good fight of faith. *Paul.*

In the world's broad field of battle, in the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle! be a hero in the strife!
Longfellow.

Our Prayer: O, our great Commander, we know that true Christians are Christian heroes; grant that we may courageously fight under Christ's banner against sin, and continue Christ's faithful soldiers as long as we live.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Philistines.
2. The Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

If you decide to have papers written, assign a topic to each pupil and let the papers be read in class next week. See those suggested on page 163.

Write Part III of the Life of Saul, Saul's Brave Son Jonathan.

REVIEW—GOD'S MERCIES TO DISOBEDIENT ISRAEL

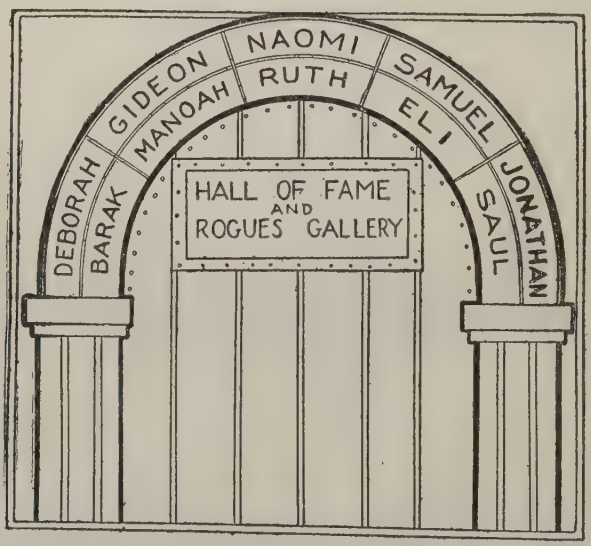
Golden Text

Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14.34

READ Nehemiah 9.26-31

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

Have the diagram below drawn upon the blackboard with the names omitted from the arch. Upon the other end of the board write the headings, "Chief Persons", "Chief Fact", and by questions secure the answers below, writing them after they have been given. After the two columns are filled, ask for names to write upon the door of the "Hall of Fame and Rogues' Gallery", and call for the reasons which entitle each name to a place there.



Chief Persons	Chief Fact
1. Joshua, Israelites, Judges	A Great Patience.
2. Deborah, Barak, Sisera	A Great Deliverance.
3. Gideon, Angel of Jehovah	A Great Call
4. Gideon, the Three Hundred, Midianites	A Great Test
5. Manoah, his Wife, Angel of Jehovah	A Great Abstinence
6. Naomi, Orpah, Ruth	A Great Resolve
7. Eli, Samuel, Jehovah	A Great Vision
8. Philistines, Israelites, a Benjamite, Eli	A Great Capture
9. Samuel, Israelites, Philistines	A Great Victory
10. Samuel, Saul, Saul's Servant	A Great Honor
11. Nahash, Jabesh-Gileadites, Saul, Ammonites, Israelites	A Great Rescue
12. Jonathan, Armorbearer, Philistines	A Great Hero

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each circle should be covered by a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

If you have drawn a picture each week, as suggested, your pupils will enjoy them and the talks about them all the more because they are familiar.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Lesson I. There is a large crowd of sorrowful people. An old man is being carried to his burial. The scene changes. The same crowd of people are bowing down before an image. Who was the old man? Who were the people? What were they doing in the second scene? How did God show his patience with his sinful people?

Lesson II. I see a woman sitting under a tree, and many people are coming to her. Now she is talking long and earnestly with a man who looks like a fierce soldier. We are now by a river, where there are chariots. Soldiers are coming towards them. There is great confusion, fighting, and the chariots are fleeing. Who is the woman in the first scene and what is she doing? With whom did she talk? What did she tell him? What did he promise to do? Who came in the chariots? Who pursued them? Who helped them win the victory?

Lesson III. A young man is alone. He seems to be beating something on the ground. He stops and listens. Now he is blowing a trumpet and great crowds are coming to him. It is early morning, and the young man is feeling of something on the ground. Another day has passed and again he is feeling of the same thing on the ground. Who is the young man? What was he doing at first? What did he hear? Why did he blow the trumpet? Who came? Of what was he feeling each morning? Why?

Lesson IV. I see two camps, and there is a valley between them. A great many men are leaving the first camp. Now those who staid are going to the river. Some of them are bending down to the river to drink, and others are lifting the water up to their mouths with their hands. Most of the men are now going back to camp, but some of them are going over to the second camp. There is something in their hands. Now there is a flash of light over at the second camp, a great shouting, and something is happening. What were the two camps? Why were many leaving? Why were the rest taken to the river? How were they divided? What did the men carry to the other camp? Then what did they do? What was the result?

Lesson V. A man is praying. Now there is a woman talking with a man in a field. The first man is now with them, listening eagerly to what the other man tells him. Next I see a home where there is a little baby besides the first man and the woman. Who was the baby? What did the man tell his father and mother they should do for him?

Lesson VI. Here there are three women talking together out in the open country. One young woman kisses the others and walks slowly away. The two continue their talk. Now they walk on in the opposite direction to that in which the first woman went. Who are the three? About what are they talking? Who went away alone? Where was she going? What did the others say to each other? Then where did they go?

Lesson VII. A young boy is asleep. As I look he suddenly awakes and hurries off to the bedside of an old man. He returns, and then goes again to the old man's side. Now he is sitting up in bed and eagerly listening. Who is he? Who is the old man? What made the boy go to the old man? What did he hear? How did he answer? What was he told to do?

Lesson VIII. The old man whom we saw in the last lesson is sitting by the wayside looking far off down the road. Here comes a runner in great haste. He is talking to the old man in great excitement. The old man is trembling; he falls backward from his seat; he lies very still on

I FORGETTING
I ORGIVEN
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
XII
EBENEZER
GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people.
PROVERBS 14.34.

the ground. Who is the old man? For what news was he waiting? What was he told by the runner? What was the result of his fall?

Lesson IX. A man is talking to a great gathering of people. Now he is pouring something on the ground. Now he is offering a sacrifice upon an altar and is praying. A great army is approaching. There is a heavy thunder-storm, and through it all there is fighting. The scene changes. There is a joyous crowd of people and the man is pointing to a great stone as he talks. Who is he? What was he doing in the first scene? For what did he pray? What was the result of the battle? What was the stone named? Why?

Lesson X. Two men are talking at the gate. They enter the house together and the younger man is given a seat of honor at the table; there are many at the table, but to this young man the best portions of food are given. Now two men are on the housetop, talking. It is morning now, and the two are passing through the streets of the city. They have reached the end of the city, and the old man is pouring something upon the young man's head. Who are the two men? What did they say to each other at the gate? What did the old man do to the young man the next day? What did this mean?

Lesson XI. A man is walking out of the fields driving his oxen before him. He meets an excited crowd of people. They tell him something. He speaks with great emphasis. Another battle scene I next see. Then there is a third scene, the people are shouting, and a crown is being put upon the man's head. Who is the man? What was he told? What did he say? What did he do? Why was he crowned?

Lesson XII. Here is only a steep, rocky hill. Now I see two men at the foot of the hill. They are calling back and forth to men at the top. The men at the top have gone away. The two men are slowly climbing the hill. It seems to be hard work. They have reached the top. There is fighting, and the men at the top are falling or fleeing before these two. Who are the two? What did the men at the top say to them? What did Jonathan say to his armorbearer? What happened when they reached the top of the hill?

QUESTIONS FOR AN ORAL REVIEW

Instead of asking these questions, they may be written one each upon a slip of paper (as many slips for each question as the number of your pupils) and the answer may be written beneath in class. Give out additional slips with new questions as they are called for.

For Younger Pupils.

1. What did the people worship instead of God, and how were they punished?
2. When they repented, whom did God raise up to help them?
3. What was the name of a woman who judged Israel?
4. What was the name of the man who led the people to victorious battle at her summons?
5. How did Gideon find out who were the brave men in his army?
6. How many men did he have left with whom to fight the Midianites?
7. How did they surprise the enemy, and what was the result?
8. What girl was very unselfish?
9. How did she prove her love for an older woman?
10. What was the older woman's name?
11. What was the name of the great king who became her grandson?
12. What did Hannah promise she would do if God would give her a son?
13. As soon as Samuel was old enough, where did his mother take him?
14. How did Samuel help Eli?
15. What wonderful experience did Samuel have in the Temple?
16. Who was the first King of Israel?
17. How did Samuel honor him, when they first met?
18. What was the first great thing that Saul did after he was made king?
19. What courageous thing did Jonathan do?
20. What did Jonathan say about God's power to help?

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For Older Pupils.

Deborah. Who was the first woman to rule in Israel? Who was her right-hand man? What did they do for their people? What is your estimation of Deborah? What is your estimation of Deborah's song?

Gideon. What message came to Gideon? How did he make sure that God would help him? How did he reduce his army? Why? How did he attack the enemy and what was the result? What is your estimation of Gideon's character?

Samson. What was the name of Samson's father? What was his father's prayer concerning his child? From what enemy did Samson begin to free his people?

Ruth. What was the nationality of Ruth? Why did Naomi seek to dissuade her from going to Bethlehem? What answer did Ruth make? Of what king did she become the ancestress? What characteristics do you admire in Ruth? In Naomi?

Samuel. How did Samuel's call to be a prophet come to him? Of what did he warn Eli? Of what had Eli been culpable? How did Eli meet his death? What did Samuel do for the people at Mizpah? How did he commemorate God's help in the victory over the Philistines? In what places did he judge Israel?

Saul. How did Saul and Samuel first meet? In what light does Saul appear at that meeting? How did he live at first after being anointed king? How did he prove his fitness for the kingship? What effect did his victory over the Ammonites have upon the people's attitude toward him? In what light does he appear in connection with this victory?

Jonathan. Who was Jonathan? What did he do in the warfare against the Philistines? What is your estimation of his character?

Miscellaneous Questions. To what period does the Book of Ruth belong? Who are the leading characters in the First Book of Samuel? What great change in government took place as recorded in First Samuel? Who was the judge who shook off the yoke of the Midianites? What judge was physically strong but his prowess accomplished little for Israel? What judge freed the Israelites from the oppression of the Canaanites? What judge was a poet? What judge was infirm of will? Who was the last judge of Israel? Who was the greatest judge of Israel? How did it happen that a woman belonging to a foreign nation married a pious Israelite? What high priest failed to train his sons aright? Who went off to look for lost property and was highly honored? By whom was a free discharge offered to every soldier who wished it? Who was the first king of Israel? Who was called a cake of barley bread? What do we mean when we say something is "like Gideon's fleece"? What do we mean when we say that a person is "like Gideon's three hundred men"? What was the battle cry of the men who conquered the Midianites? To which one of the Bible characters of this quarter is the genealogy of Jesus traced? What character is famous for steadfastness of purpose? For unselfish devotion? What two boys were dedicated to God by their mothers? Which lesson of the Quarter do you like best? Why? What is the best verse in all the lessons?

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOKS

How many Books are there in the Old Testament? Into what four divisions do they fall? Name the Historical Books. The Poetical Books. The Major Prophets. The Minor Prophets.

What period is covered by the Book of Judges? What is its relation to the Book of Joshua? What was the condition of the people in the time of the judges? How did a judge rule? For what is each of these judges remembered: Othniel, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson? See questions on page 81.

What is the relation of the Book of Ruth to that of Judges? What phase of life does it picture? What customs of those early times does it portray? What is the story? See questions on page 109.

What is the relation of the Book of First Samuel to that of the Judges? Who is the last Judge and the first prophet? What change in government is narrated? See questions on page 125.

Where in the Bible is a story told about:

A boy who heard a call at night and learned what God's will was for him?

A girl who left her own home to go to a strange land and care for an older woman whom she loved?
A woman who saved her people from the enemy?
A man who believed that God could save by many or by few?
The anointing of the first king of Israel?
The capture of the ark and the death of Eli?
Gideon and his three hundred?
The stone of Ebenezer?

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW

For Younger Pupils.

The names of all the characters in this quarter's lessons.
What you know about a girl whose story begins sadly but ends happily.
An account of what a boy heard in the night.
The story of a battle with lights and pitchers.
A boy who was the child of prayer.
Ruth's words to Naomi.
Samuel's words when called to be a prophet.
Saul's words when Samuel first honored him.
Jonathan's words about God's power to help.

For Older Pupils.

The religious value of the Book of the Judges.
The beauty of the Book of Ruth.
The history of the First Book of Samuel.
The great battles in the times of the Judges.
The story of a family who lived quietly in an age of violence.
A description of a character of great moral strength and gentleness.
A description of a character of great physical strength and moral weakness.
An appreciation of Deborah.
An appreciation of Gideon.
An appreciation of Samuel.
An appreciation of Saul.
A comparison of Samson and Hercules.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. When do we first hear about the Amalekites? (Subject-Index of Bible). 2. Read an earlier account of Saul's disobedience. (1 S. 13.8-14.) 3. What was Saul's attitude toward his sin? (*Guide,* p. 167.) 4. What were the teraphim? (*Guide,* p. 166.) 5. In what city was this conference between Saul and Samuel held? 6. What other leader went from this same place to take a city which had been "devoted" to God? (Josh. 5.10; 6.2, 17.) 7. What is said in Joshua 6.18, 19 in regard to the spoil of the city? 8. Who disobeyed that command and what was the punishment? (Josh. 7.10-26.) 9. With the thought of our Golden Text compare Amos 5.21-24; Isa. 1.10-17; Micah, 6.6-8; Hosea 6.6 and Jer. 7.22. 10. On what occasion did Jesus say, Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice? (Mt. 9.13.) 11. Who was it said to Jesus that to love God and one's neighbor is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices? (Mk. 12.28-34.)

Questions to think about. 1. What is meant in verse 11 by saying that it repented God? (*Guide,* p. 164.) 2. What does "wroth" mean? 3. For what purpose had Saul set up a monument? (*Guide,* p. 165.) 4. What impression may Saul have wished to make upon Samuel by his greeting? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 165.) 5. For what purpose had Saul doubtless spared Agag? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 165.) 6. Saul claimed that the oxen had been offered for sacrifice: does a good intention excuse a wrong action? 7. How did Saul show himself a weak ruler? 8. How did Saul prove himself a coward? 9. What do you think of the excuses that Saul gave? 10. What is the difference between excuses and reasons? 11. What excuse did Adam give for his disobedience? 12. What excuse did Eve give? 13. What excuse do you ever give? 14. What does our Golden Text mean? 15. What are some of Christ's sayings in regard to his perfect obedience to God's will?

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I—APRIL 4

SAUL REJECTED BY THE LORD

Golden Text

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. 1 Samuel 15.22

LESSON 1 Samuel 15: verses 10-23 printed
MEMORIZE verses 22, 23

10 Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Samuel was wroth; and he cried unto Jehovah all night. 12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal. 13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. 16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; 18 and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah? 20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. 22 And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

10. *Then.*. Read the first nine verses.—*Came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying.* It was at night, seemingly, verse 11, and Samuel may have had a dream in which he was convinced that God was speaking to him.

11. *It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king.* The Divine Nature is not changeable: God is not a man that he should repent, Num. 23.19, repeated by Samuel in verse 29; I, Jehovah, change not, Mal. 3.6. Samuel was convinced that Saul was no longer the man for the kingship, that God rejected him, and to express this change he represents God as using words which a human ruler might use in such a case. "As God's hand represents to man his active interference, God's eye and ear his observation and attention, so his repentance represents his purposed change of dealing. Repentance in man denotes change in himself, repentance in God denotes change in man" (*Wood*). —*He is turned back from following me.* Recall Samuel's exhortation to the people, "Turn not aside from following Jehovah" 1 S. 12.20. "He turned round from following God, in order to go his own ways. This was Saul's real sin. He would no longer be the follower and servant of the Lord, but would be absolute ruler in Israel. Pride arising from the consciousness of his own

strength led him astray to break the command of God" (*Delitzsch*).—*Wroth.* Angry: consumed with righteous anger. The nation under the guidance of a faithless ruler was in peril.—*Cried unto Jehovah all night.* The thought seems to be that he interceded for a change in Saul.

12. *He set him up a monument.* To commemorate his victory over the Amalekites and exalt himself. Note that he set *him* up the monument, as in Lesson XI.—*And went down to Gilgal.* There to offer sacrifice in celebration of the victory. Here it was that Samuel had pledged the king and the people to obedience, chapter XII.

13. *Blessed be thou of Jehovah.* A common form of salutation, yet Saul's use of it here may indicate a guilty conscience and a desire to conciliate the prophet by a gracious greeting. "When my ten-year-old son comes in from school with an effective greeting, I begin to sit up and take notice. When he is unusually voluble, and his laughter seems forced, I think at once of a partridge fluttering across the hunter's path with drooping wing, to lure him from her nearby nest. When he manifests an extraordinary solicitude for my health and for my fatigue under the duties of the day I am sure that something has happened at school: and if he is careful to steer all the conversation away from school, I know that I must begin to conduct a catechism" (*Lewis*).—*I have performed the commandment of Jehovah.* The commandment is recorded in verse 3. Like many another guilty man, Saul forestalls the accusation which he felt was coming by immediately professing his innocence. He had performed only part of the order.

14. *What meaneth then.* The command had been to destroy "ox and sheep, camel and ass": how, then, if he had carried out the command, could he account for all the sheep and oxen whose bleating and lowing were heard?

Assyrian Representation of Carrying off Spoils Taken in Warfare

15. *They have brought . . . the people spared.* How weak and cowardly Saul appears as he shifts the blame upon the people. Compare Aaron's excuse for the golden calf at Sinai, 1 S. 14.24, 34 and 44.—*To sacrifice unto Jehovah.* The greater portion would become theirs for a feast. "Sacrificing the best of the booty taken in was as an offering of first fruits to the Lord, was not indeed prescribed in the law, but was a praiseworthy sign of piety, by which all honor was rendered to the Lord as the giver of the victory: see Num. 31.48. This, Saul meant to say, was what the people had done on the present occasion; only he overlooked the fact, that what was devoted to the Lord could not be offered to him as a burnt-offering, because being most holy, it belonged to him already, Lev. 27.29, and according to Dt. 13.16, was to be put to death, as Samuel had expressly said to Saul, verse 3" (*Delitzsch*). "What God asks of man is not primarily adoration and recognition, but obedience, loyalty, faith" (*Peabody*).—*We have.* Saul represents himself as having a share in the obedience, but in the disobedience the people alone are guilty!—*Utterly destroyed.* Hebrew *devoted.* A person or thing "devoted" was regarded as consecrated to God, and could not be reclaimed. A man or a beast "devoted" must be put to death (Lev. 27.29). In the taking of Jericho, which had been "devoted," such articles as could not be consumed by fire—gold and silver—were devoted to the use of the sanctuary. The spoil of the Amalekites, having been "devoted" to God, did not belong to the Israelites, and therefore Saul could not rightly offer them in sacrifice to God.

16. *Stay.* Samuel stops Saul's words, he would listen to no further falsehood and hypocrisy.—*This night.* Last night, we would say.

17. *Though thou wast little in thine own sight.* The reference is to Saul's own words when he was anointed king, lesson X.—*Wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?* If Saul's excuse had been true, he was guilty because he was in authority, and should have restrained the people.

18. *Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites.* They are called sinners because of the ancient offense against Israel: read Ex. 17.8-15; Dt. 25.17-19. —*Fight against them until they be consumed.* "It may have seemed to the statesman of that time that there could be no safety whilst Amalek remained unsubdued. Is it not in this way that even so-called Christian nations have treated the native races? But, in the growing spirit of humanity, such wars (of annihilation) would not be permitted, and certainly would not be viewed as the direct commission of heaven. We are dealing here with the earlier stages of the nation's vision of God, and must remember that the Bible only gives us the history of the progress of revelation; and generally without passing judgment on the action it narrates" (*F. B. Meyer*).

19. *Didst fly upon the spoil.* Thus graphically he tells them that it was greed that led to the saving of the spoil. Saul had been directed to destroy the spoil as thoroughly as the people, it was to be a solemn judicial execution of a sinful race, but the Israelites had treated the occasion as they would an ordinary warfare and had greedily enriched themselves with the possessions of their enemy.

20. *And have brought Agag the king of the Amalekites.* He does not state the fact that he was bringing Agag back to grace his triumph, much as did the Roman conquerors with their enemies.

21. *Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?* Compare Amos 5.21-24; Hosea 6.6; Micah 6.6-8; Ps. 40.6-8; 51.16-18; Isa. 1.11-15; Jer. 7.22. "Sacrifice without obedience is sacrilege" (*Moody*).—*To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* These are parallel expressions, a part of the poetic form in Hebrew, to obey and to hearken meaning the same, as likewise sacrifice and the fat of rams, Obedience to God's will is more important than observance of religious forms: no amount of careful attention to ritual will atone for wilful neglect of duty. Compare Christ's teaching in Mt. 9.13; 12.7, and his approval of the scribe who quotes these words, Mark 12.33.

23. *Rebellion . . . stubbornness.* These were the true causes of Saul's disobedience. "The tide that is in the affairs of men Saul took at the flood, and it bore him on for a time; but eventually, in place of guiding his bark dexterously along the stream, he obstinately set it athwart the current, and so made shipwreck" (*Wade*).—*Is as the sin.* Is as bad as the sin.—*Witchcraft.* Hebrew, *divination,* RVm. There may be here an allusion to Saul's zeal to exterminate idolatry and witches, 1 S. 28.9. "It may be that whilst we denounce certain forms of egregious sin, we are ourselves guilty of other sins, equally culpable in God's sight" (*Meyer*).—*Stubbornness is as idolatry.* Or, *iniquity,* RVm. Is as bad as idolatry. "All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry, because it makes self-will, the human I, into a god. So that all manifest opposition to the word and commandment of God is, like idolatry, a rejection of the true God" (*Delitzsch.*—*Teraphim.* See below.—*He hath also rejected thee from being king.* Saul remained king many years longer, but from this time on he must have felt that he was no longer God's chosen representative, and he knew that the fate of his dynasty was sealed, no son of his would be his successor. Compare Demosthenes' words: It is not possible, O Athenians, that a power should be permanent which is marked with injustice, perjury and falsehood.

LIGHT FOR ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *Teraphim.* The teraphim were household images supposed to bring the blessings of food, health, etc., to the home, and they seem to have been reverenced as idols and consulted oracularly. They were often in human form, some have been discovered with a human head on a brute body, and others the reverse of this. The first mention of teraphim in the Bible is in the account of Jacob's flight from his father-in-law Laban, and the latter's pursuit in search of the teraphim which his daughter Rachel had carried away. In the time of the Judges the teraphim were worshipped by an entire tribe, as told in the 17th

and 18th chapters of the Book of Judges. Michal, the daughter of Saul and wife of David, in order to give her husband more time to escape from the messengers sent by Saul, put the teraphim in his bed so as to make the messengers believe that David was asleep. The reverence of the teraphim together with the worship of Jehovah continued even after the return from the captivity.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Where was Saul when we first heard of him? At what time did he show his dutifulness to his father? How did he show himself courteous to Samuel? On what occasion did he express the thought that he was little in his own sight? What were his words? Soon after being anointed king, how did he show himself a heroic and an able leader? To whom did he ascribe the victory? How did he prove disobedient at Gilgal? What rash vow did he make on the day of the Battle of Michmash?

Success leads to Defeat. Saul was successful in his wars with Israel's enemies, the Moabites and Ammorites on the east, the Edomites on the south, and Zobah on the north, and the Philistines on the west. Prosperity made him presumptuous. He returned from his latest victory over the Amalekites flushed with success, arrogant and self-willed. The prophet Samuel had given him his commission to utterly annihilate the Amalekites, and destroy all their possessions. How he failed and was rebuked, is the theme of our lesson. It was really a test whether the king would be ruled by God through his prophet Samuel, or whether he would be a self-willed despot. He proved to be the latter.

The Two Accounts of Saul's Disobedience. With this lesson 1 S. 13.8-14 should be compared. In one account, before the war with the Philistines, Saul offered sacrifice at Gilgal instead of waiting for the prophet Samuel, as the latter had ordered, and in consequence was told by Samuel that because he had not kept the commandment of God his kingdom should not continue, the throne should be given to a man after God's own heart. Whether Saul was told by Samuel on two different occasions that God had rejected him, or whether these two narratives were told by different writers to account for the estrangement between Saul and Samuel, is a matter of dispute among scholars.

Saul's Attitude toward his Sin. His guilt had been found out, he feared the consequences with the people of the prophet's scorn. "I have sinned", he cried, but the words were those of a suppliant cringing from the consequences of his sin, rather than of a sinner penitently craving pardon. He besought Samuel to pardon his sin and come and worship with him. But like Cato the Censor, reiterating that "Carthage must be destroyed", the prophet repeated Saul's doom. As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of his robe to detain him, and tore it. The prophet saw in this a symbol of the tearing away from Saul of his kingdom and the giving of it to a better king. Again Saul acknowledged his sin and begged Samuel to honor him before the people and turn with him to worship. Samuel yielded in this, and then demanded that Agag be brought before him. With his own hand he killed Agag and then returned to Ramah. He never again came to see the king.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Amalekites were a nomad people who lived south of Judah.

Carmel was not Mount Carmel, but a place about seven miles south of Hebron. From Carmel Samuel went to Gilgal, which had been the scene of Saul's crowning; see lesson XI of last quarter.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Have you noticed how practical and personal are all these Old Testament lessons, no matter how foreign to our own times are the incidents they relate? The whole subject today, of "devoting" an enemy to annihilation, of offering bloody sacrifices, of the relation of prophet and king, belongs only to the far-away time and place which we are studying, but the underlying religious truths are so many that each teacher must first of all determine the one which will be most helpful for his class. Two topics only can be treated here, because the Easter topic is the preferable one today for young pupils.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Today is Easter, and the alternative lesson given, from Mt. 28.1-10, with its Golden Text, "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead", 1 Cor. 15.20, is the one you will wish to teach today. The Third Topic is written for your use.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Among the legends of the Middle Ages there is one about a fierce dragon that came up out of the sea and devoured men and women and children. A few brave men went to attack it, but their horses and dogs fled at the sight of the monster, from whose eyes flames shot forth, and from whose mouth floods of water poured, and they themselves were killed. The dragon was held to be invincible, and the Master of the Order of St. John forbade any knight to imperil his life in a vain attempt to slay the monster. There was one knight, however, who thought he could free the world from such a scourge. He went to a forge and made an iron dragon just like the real one, flames and all. Then he led his horse and dogs against this sham dragon again and again till they became accustomed to it, and found it harmless. When they were no longer afraid he went forth to meet and slay the real dragon. Great was the rejoicing among the people and loud were their praises of the hero. But when the knight brought the dragon's head to the Master of the Order he was met with a stern rebuke. In that Order strict obedience was regarded as the most important of all virtues, and the Master said to him: "Thou hast been disobedient. Thou hast broken thy vow of obedience to commands. No longer art thou a son of this Order." The knight hung his head in shame and humbly turned to leave, and then, the legend says, the Master called him back, exclaiming with tears in his eyes: "Thou art worthy to be a Master among us, for thou hast true humility. The man who conquers his own spirit is greater than he who slays many dragons."

Saul, the king of the Israelites, was given a task to do, a fiercer enemy than this fabled dragon to conquer, and with the task a very definite command to obey. He performed his task, but disobeyed the command, and when he was told that he had been disobedient, he did not hang his head in shame like this young knight, for he had never learned to conquer his own spirit.

For Older Pupils. A British magazine has an article entitled "Three Mottoes". "I and God; God and I; God and not I", are the mottoes. The writer says that when he first became a Christian he thought of himself first and asked God to help him attain his own will; then as he advanced in Christian service he thought of himself as a co-worker with God in work that was God's work; but at last he realized in God the one great Worker and in himself only an instrument to be used in God's own way and time.

Saul's motto when first we meet him might have been "God and not I". When he conquered the Ammonites he said, "Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel!" And now he has gone backward till in today's account his motto might have been "I and God".

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. To Obey is Better than Sacrifice

The Spirit or the Form of Religion. A German peasant who robbed and murdered his landlord was aided in the deed by the latter's servant. As the peasant was climbing in the window, the servant shoved a movable oven underneath for him to step on; but the peasant drew back in alarm, exclaiming: "There is dough sticking on the oven, and bread is the gift of God, it would be sacrilege to step on it. Put a chair here instead." He would take the life of a man, the most sacred of all God's gifts, but would not step on a piece of dough, because bread was the gift of God! Thus inconsistent is Saul as he is represented in our lesson story. He would not obey the command of God, but would not fail to offer sacrifice to him.

To Obey is Better than Gifts. It happened when my friend was a child. Her father was one of the stern Puritans of New England; stern indeed, but wise and very loving. They had gone out into the West, and were living in

the neighborhood of a beautiful lake. It was thought not safe for the child to go alone to the lake, so she had been forbidden. But the fascination of the lovely sheet of water was too much for the poetical soul of the child; so, as she wandered about within the prescribed limits, the temptation overpowered her, and she had a delightful stroll all by herself along the shore. She tried to quiet her conscience by keeping out of all danger most carefully, and she thought if she told her father so, he would see the reasonableness of it. But she was politic enough to gather a handful of beautiful shells and bring them to her father. When she put them into his hand he flung them away as far as he could, and simply said, *"My child, to obey is better than sacrifice."* The lesson was never forgotten. It entered into her blood, and had, no doubt, not a little to do with making her the splendid woman and noble mother she has been. *Dr. J. Monro Gibson.*

A Hindu's Trust in Conscientious Ceremonies. An intelligent Hindu was asked what was his idea of religion. This was his answer: "I believe in one God, and I repeat my prayer to him every morning and every evening. This prayer covers six printed pages, but I can pray it in less than ten minutes. I have also made a pilgrimage to a sacred spring in Amritsar, down to whose water eighty-five steps lead. I descended and bathed in the holy water, then went up one step and repeated my prayer. I went down again and bathed, and then ascending to the second step, repeated my prayer. And so I continued until I had ascended the eighty-five steps, had taken eighty-five baths, and had repeated eighty-five prayers. It took about fourteen hours for this, from five in the afternoon till seven the next morning." Surely this is religiousness without religion.

How a Boy in Morocco heard about our Lesson. An agent of the Bible Society had won many friends among the boys in a village of Morocco. Absalem, one of them, wanted to be a muleteer. The agent told Absalem that he would be responsible for the mule and the pack, and asked if he would obey every command. "I will always obey you in everything", the boy replied.

They started out on their first trip, and soon came to a river. Evidently it had been in flood the day before, for the sand-banks were steep and high. What happened we will let the agent tell in his own words.

"Now, Absalem, we shall have to be careful," I said. "You must wait here until I find an easy place to ford, and when I have done so I shall come back and lead you across, for I don't wish the tent and bedding, and our food and the Scriptures to be damaged by the least drop of water. Are you listening?"

"Nam ya, sidi" (Yes, my master).

I left him, and, taking a zigzag course, I found a place where I could get over with comparative ease. Then I turned my horse's head, meaning to retrace my steps and guide Absalem over, but at that moment I heard a splash in the river! Absalem had disappeared.

I might have guessed it. Instead of waiting he had disobeyed my orders and tried to follow the course I had taken. But he lost his head by looking at the whirling water underneath, and then the mule stumbled, and down it went, taking the pack and all under the water!

This was scarcely the moment to ask for an explanation: down I jumped off my horse, and, getting out my jack-knife, rushed into the river—without waiting to remove my clothes—and cut the cords of the pack, pulling it through the water to the other side. Thus the pack was saved, though what the contents were like I did not dare to think: but the mule couldn't get up, and I was afraid it would drown and that would have been a serious matter for me, for, alas! the mule was borrowed. Absalem pulled at the reins, while I extricated its fore-feet from the weeds with which they were entangled, and between us we got it safely out.

What a pretty picture we made, dripping wet, tired and hungry, and our food all spoiled! The tea, sugar, bread and butter were a mass of pulp. As we sat in the sun drying our clothes, I had a serious talk with Absalem. "Why did you not wait?"

"My master," he began penitently, "it was Satan who whispered into my ear, saying, 'Surely you, a *Moslem,* are quite as able as a Nazarene to cross the river without aid!' so I listened and obeyed him. But, my master, you know I am sorry, and would lay down my life for you."

I told him the story of Saul's disobedience. If you know it you will see the lesson which I tried to impress upon Absalem that day.

II. Putting the Blame upon Others

Saul's Contemptibleness. That the king whose word was law should attempt to excuse his violation of the prophet's command by saying he could not help it, the people were responsible, was one of the basest features of his sin. It was evidently not premeditated. The prophet came upon him unexpectedly. Saul's gracious greeting and prompt falsehood did not deceive the prophet. "What about this bleating and this lowing that I hear, how can you explain this, if you have utterly destroyed the Amalekites and their possessions as you claim?" the prophet asked. "Ah, yes, those oxen and sheep," the king returned while he hastily meditated what answer to give. "But those belong to the people, it was they who spared them." Having shifted the blame from his own shoulders, he proceeded to excuse the people, claiming that the animals had been spared for the best of purposes, to offer sacrifice to the God of their beloved prophet Samuel.

When Aaron made the golden calf he put the blame upon the people. "Thou knowest the people that they are set on evil," he said to Moses when the latter arraigned him for that sin. In that case, too, the motives were declared good, for Aaron said he had built an altar before the image and proclaimed a feast to Jehovah.

Even as Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, men and women and boys and girls have been trying to shift to others the responsibility for their own misdeeds. They are ever seeking some scapegoat to bear their sins, even as the high priest on the Day of Atonement symbolically laid the sins of the Hebrew people on the head of the goat and sent it to perish in the wilderness.

He would not Lay the Blame upon God. Frederick the Great once when about to declare war asked his Secretary to write the proclamation. The Secretary began: "Whereas in the Providence of God," etc., etc. "Stop that lying," Frederick thundered, "simply say: Frederick wants some more land."

The New Wall Street. Speaking at Washington, Mr. William C. Van Antwerp, one of the governors of the New York Stock Exchange, said: "In the last analysis we come to know that only righteousnss exalteth a nation. We of the Stock Exchange know this today better than we ever knew it before, and we intend to live by it through the years. We shall make many mistakes, no doubt, but we shall stick to our standards and rejoice in them, and some day—mark my words—this great market place will earn the admiration and respect of the whole people.

"We are determined to show our critics by our deeds that the Stock Exchange means something vital and vitalizing in America, that it is an important adjunct of the new Wall Street—a broad highway from ocean to ocean, doing its utmost to meet the needs of a happy and prosperous land."

There is no abject confession in Mr. Van Antwerp's pronouncement, and there was need of none. He indicates past conditions sufficiently when he describes those of the present and makes his promises for the future.

It is to be regretted that when Howard Elliott spoke in New York the other day on "What Ails the New Haven?" he could not have made an equally "honorable surrender." He gave many reasons for the plight of that great property, but he did not mention the one that had more to do with it than all the others. On the subject of monopoly and plunder as promoted by the old Wall Street he was silent. *Condensed* from an *Editorial* in the *New York World.*

Laying the Blame upon Dead Circumstances. Here is a man who, as far as a man can be, is a brute. Suppose you question that man about his life. You expect him to be ashamed, to be repentant. There is not a sign of anything like that! He says: "I am the victim of circumstances. What a corrupt, licentious, profane age this is in which we live! When I was in college I got into a bad set. When I went into business I was surrounded by bad influences. When I grew rich, men flattered me. The world has made me what I am." Another man is not a profligate, but is a miser, or a mere business machine. "What can you ask of me," he says, "this is a mercantile community. The busi-

ness man who does not attend to his business goes to the wall. I am what this intense, commercial life has made me." And so with the woman of society. And so with the politician and his selfishness and partisanship. It is what one is perpetually hearing about disbelief. "The times have made me sceptical. How is it possible for a man to live in days like these and yet believe in God and Jesus and the Resurrection?"

The father says of his profligate son whom he has never done one wise or vigorous thing to make a noble and pure-minded man: "I can not tell how it has come. It has not been my fault." The father whose faith has been mean and selfish says the same of his boy who is a sceptic. Everywhere there is this cowardly casting off of responsibilities upon the dead circumstances around us. It is a very hard treatment of the poor, dumb, helpless world which cannot answer to defend itself. It takes us as we give ourselves to it. It is our minister fulfilling our commissions for us upon our own souls. If we say to it, "Make us noble," it does make us noble. If we say to it, "Make us mean," it does make us mean. And then we take the nobility and say, "Behold, how noble I have made myself." And we take the meanness and say, "See how mean the world has made me."

Men differ, perhaps, nowhere else more than in their disposition to face the acts of their lives and to recognize their own personal part in and responsibility for the things they do.

The only hope for any of us is in a perfectly honest manliness to claim our sins. "I did it," let me say of all my wickedness. Let me refuse to listen for one moment to any voice which would make my sins less mine. It is the only honest and the only hopeful way, the only way to know and be ourselves. When we have done that, then we are ready for the Gospel, ready for all that Christ wants to show us that we may become, and for all the powerful grace by which he wants to make us be it perfectly. *Condensed* from *A Sermon,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

III. Easter Lesson

Why Easter is such a Gladsome Time. Some of the dearest things in the world we can not see at all. Some of the things that we care for most we can not see either. That seems strange at first, doesn't it? We will tell you what we mean. You know your mother loves you, of course. You know your father loves you, too, and all the other people in your family. Love is all around you, but you can't *see* it. You can only *feel* it. You can see what love does for you every day, however. When mother comforts you if you are crying, you can feel her love. When father brings home something nice from downtown for you, you feel his love. And so it goes, all through the day. Love makes us happy, and keeps us happy. The more people we have to love us the better it is for us, too. It is just the same with God's love. We cannot see it, but we can feel it, and we can see the things that come to us through his love. At Easter time all the music and the flowers speak to us of God's love for us. They make us remember once more that he sent his Son to earth to suffer for us, to die for us—but also to rise from the dead. That is why Easter Day is such a gladsome time.

"Easter comes, children all,
And with lilies, white and tall,
Carols sweet, and chiming bells,
To each heart this lesson tells:
That our lives must always grow
Strong in hope and pure like snow.
Easter comes, the glad, bright day!
What else do the lilies say?
'Like our fragrance rich and sweet,
Let your love each other greet.
What in love grows toward the sky
God will love, nor let it die.'"

Picture Story Paper.

Easter Means that we are to have Another Life after This One. After Christ was crucified and buried he rose from the tomb. That made it sure that we will rise. When you see the Easter flowers, and hear the Easter music, do you ever ask: "If a boy die, shall he live again?" God tells you, "Yes", and he wants you to think, "Yes." Have you done anything about it? Do not be afraid to think. Here is how Dick and Mary did some thinking. While looking for shells on the beach one morning, they found a dead bird. Some one had shot it. They looked at the feathered body curiously and pitifully. "Mary," said Dick, "when we die, we'll look like that. How does any one know there's any more of us than a bird?" "What a curious boy you are!" said Mary; "how should I know?" Dick picked up the dead bird, then caught sight of his teacher coming toward them. He ran to her with his question. "Well, Dick," said she, "suppose you had been shot, and were lying on the sands, and this bird had passed over you, would it have stopped to pity you, or wonder who shot you and if you had gone to heaven?" "I suppose not," said Dick. "Then there is something in you that can love and be sorry, and wonder and ask questions, that the bird does not have. That is the part of you that is not like the bird, and will live forever." Dick and Mary buried the bird in the sand, but they never forgot why they were different from the bird and more precious to Jesus because they had a spirit that would go to God. *James M. Farrar* in *Chats With Children of the Church.*

A Child's Easter.

Had I been there, when Christ, our Lord, lay sleeping
Within that tomb in Joseph's garden fair,
I would have watched all night beside my Saviour—
Had I been there.
All thro' the long, dark night when others slumbered,
Close, close beside him still I would have stayed,
And, knowing how he loved the little children,
Ne'er felt afraid.
I would have kept so still, and clasping
My hands together as I do in prayer,
I would have knelt, humble, but oh, so happy!—
Had I been there.
Dear Lord, thro' death and night I was not near thee;
But in thy risen glory can rejoice;
So loud and glad in song this Easter morning,
Thou'll hear my voice.

Annie Trumbull Slosson.

An Easter Custom of Capri. If we were on the island of Capri on Easter morning we might see a very curious sight. Rising early, we should climb the long flight of steps that lead upward from the shore, past the quaint old houses by the vineyards and the orange groves, until we reach the church. There we should find a crowd of people waiting; dark-eyed boys and girls with jet black hair; women wearing the many-colored costume of the island; men with their faces sunburnt from their daily exposure to the rays of the hot, fierce sun.

By and by there comes the priest, with the boy acolytes behind him, chanting as they come. First they enter the church, where they hold a service; then, after a while, they reappear outside the church and people and priests and boys all stand together on the great square in front, with the wide sea below and the great broad dome of the blue sky above. But what are those people carrying in their hands? Cages. And what are in the cages? Birds. Let us watch. See, there is a signal given. What does it mean? The doors of the cages are being opened; and the men, or the boys, or the girls who hold them are putting in their hands. And now they are taking out the birds. They must be about to set them free. And so they are. Another moment and there is a little cloud of birds just above the people's heads, and in another the birds which a minute ago were captives in their cages are flying upward, here and there and everywhere, into the wide sky beyond. They, every one of them, are free. This is what may be seen every Easter morn-

ing on the island of Capri, and it may be seen also, I believe, in other places, especially in Russia. *J. Byles,* in *The Boy and the Angel.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US.

What are you doing that is contrary to the will of God? What are you leaving undone that he has commanded us to do? You have Christ's commandments: are you keeping them? Are you like Saul in that you are only partially obedient to the divine will?

When did you last try to shirk the responsibility for some evil deed by putting the blame upon some one else?

Are you careful about religious forms and observances and yet heedless about living a truly Christian life?

A Prayer for Easter Day: Almighty God, enable us, we beseech thee, on this glad day when we commemorate the rising from the dead of thy dear Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, to lay aside the garments of mourning, and put on the incorruptible raiment of faith and hope. Wipe from our eyes the tears of sorrow and release our souls from the bitterness of grief for those whom we have loved and lost, enabling us to see them by faith in the joy and beauty of their new life. Strengthen us that we may pass the days of our earthly sojourning in faith and patience as pilgrims who have here no continuing city but seek one to come. And finally, we beseech thee, that we, and all those who have departed this life in the true faith of The Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss in thy eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord (*Dr. J. W. Dawson*).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The treatment of native races by Christian races: in special, our treatment of the Indians. See "The Epic of the Indian," *Atlantic Monthly,* Jan., 1913; "A Despoiled People," *Outlook,* Jan. 28, 1911.
2. Who is Responsible? See *Atlantic Monthly,* p. 70, 1914.
3. An Easter talk. See "Life and Immortality," *Outlook,* April 11, 1914.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What does 1 S. 17.12 tell us about Jesse? 2. How did Eliab resemble Saul in appearance? 3. What evil quality of Saul's did he possess as shown in 1 S. 17.23? 4. How old was David at this time? 5. How does Browning describe David in his poem entitled "Saul"? 6. What is said about him in 1 S. 13.14; 16.18; Acts 13.22? 7. What does Ps. 78.70-71 say about the call of David? 8. Describe the horn of oil (*Guide,* p. 175.) 9. What did David do after the anointing? 10. What relation was David to Ruth? (Ruth 4.17.) 11. Who was born in Bethlehem "because he was of the house and family of David"? (Luke 2.1-7.) 12. What is said in 1 Ch. 28.9; Isa. 55.8, 9 and Jer. 17.10 about the way God judges? 13. What is said in Psalm 139.1-7 about God as the Searcher of men's hearts?

Questions to think about. 1. Why was Samuel mourning for Saul? 2. Where is Bethlehem? 3. Why did the elders come to meet Samuel trembling? 4. What is the meaning of "sanctify yourself"? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 174.) 5. How was Samuel made aware of "the word of Jehovah"? 6. How was height regarded among oriental nations? (*Guide,* p. 175.) 7. Did David understand why Samuel anointed him? 8. Does the account indicate that a good appearance is not to be desired? (Eliab is not rejected because of his good looks and his height, but because he was not the man for the kingship: David was the man, he stood the test of character, and he was also "goodly to look upon.") 9. If we could arrange all the great men of the world in a row, would the greatest men stand at the head because they were the tallest? 10. Where would Napoleon stand among the generals? 11. If they were arranged according to their good looks, where would Lincoln be? 12. Where would Washington be? 13. What is the difference between character and reputation? 14. In what does God's way of judging a person differ from man's way?

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LESSON II—APRIL 11

DAVID ANOINTED KING

Golden Text

Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. 1 Samuel 16.7

LESSON 1 Samuel 16: verses 4-13 printed
MEMORIZE verses 12, 13

4 And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5 And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah; sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him. 7 But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. 11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Jehovah said unto Samuel.* Samuel in his inner consciousness was made aware of Jehovah's desire: this is what the dialogue in verses 1-3 and the words of Jehovah recorded in verses 6-12, mean.—*How long wilt thou mourn for Saul.* Grieve over Saul's wilful disobedience, his unfitness for the kingship, as recorded in our last lesson. See 1 S. 15.35.—*Fill thy horn with oil.* See p. 175.—*The Bethlehemite.* Native of Bethlehem.

2. *Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah.* This may be explained as not a falsehood, for Samuel purposed holding a sacrifice; he cautiously mentions only this object of his visit, keeping silent about the more important object. "A man always is to be himself the judge of how much of his mind he will show to other men. There are impertinent inquiries made; your rule is, to leave the inquirer uninformed on that matter; not, if you can help it, misinformed, but precisely as dark as he was!" (*Carlyle*).

4. *Samuel did that which Jehovah spake.* Verses 1-3.—*Came to meet him trembling.* Samuel's duty as judge was to go from town to town, render judgment and punish offenders, 1 S. 7, 16, and the elders thought he was coming to Bethlehem for this purpose. "Hundreds of years after this (about a thousand), when the heavenly light appeared in the same place to the shepherds, they, too, were sore afraid; but there was as little ground for fear in the one case as in the other" (*Taylor*).

5. *I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord.* See verse 2.—*Sanctify yourselves.* Before participating in any sacred act the Israelite "sanctified himself" by ablutions and refraining from whatever would make him ceremonially unclean. See Ex. 19.10.—*He sanctified Jesse and his sons.* Samuel himself superintended their purification. Jesse was an old man in the days of Saul, 1 S. 17.12.

6. *When they were come.* To the sacrificial feast: see the last clause of verse 11.—*And said.* To himself—*The Lord's anointed.* The one whom God had chosen to be anointed, therefore, to be king (10.1; 12.3.)

7. *Jehovah said unto Samuel.* The voice was an inward one, speaking through Samuel's consciousness.—*Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature.* Eliab was another Saul, tall and handsome, and would have won Samuel's choice, but Jehovah looked deeper. Eliab, like Saul, afterwards showed himself jealous of David, 1 S. 17.23. "Don't judge by size; a fly can do more harm than an elephant" (*Youth's Companion*).—*Jehovah seeth not as man seeth.* "In the measure in which we have the love of Christ in us shall we see others as he sees them" (*J. R. Miller*).—*Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.* Man judges by seeming; Jehovah by being. The "heart" in Old Testament times is the word used for intellectual as well as moral and spiritual qualities. "What thou art before thy God, that thou art and nothing more!"

10. *Seven of his sons.* There were seven sons in all in the house, including the three already mentioned by name.

11. *There remaineth yet the youngest.* There were also two daughters, 1 S. 17.12; 1 Ch. 2.16.—*He is keeping the sheep.* "God estimates us not by the position we are in, but the way in which we fill it" (*T. Edwards*). "The great consecrations of life are apt to come suddenly without warning: while we are patiently and faithfully keeping sheep in the wilderness, the messenger is hurrying toward us with the vial of sacred oil to make us kings" (*Saxe Holm*).—*We will not sit down till he come hither.* Sit down for the feast which was to follow the sacrifice.

12. *Ruddy.* Whether this refers to his red cheeks or to his auburn hair is uncertain; Delitzsch says that it denotes the reddish color of hair, which was regarded as a mark of beauty where the hair was generally black. Browning speaks of Saul as "God's child with his dew on thy gracious gold hair".—*Of a beautiful countenance.* Hebrew, *fair of eyes,* RVm.—*For this is he.* The one whom Jehovah had told him would be king in Saul's stead, verse 1.

13. *The horn of oil.* See below.—*Anointed him.* As Samuel had anointed Saul so now he anoints David, "a prophetic designation of the man whom God, in his own way and at his own time, would place upon the throne—a secret sign and declaration of God's fore-ordained purpose." "It is the oil of the heavenly anointing that consecrates his life and transforms his career into a service. 'I have found David my servant'. It is the fact that he was himself possessed, gripped by the mighty hand, grasped by the eternal purpose, which awakens in every faithful and true heart the spirit of obedience and trust. It is neither his prudence, nor his fidelity, nor his courage, but his religion which from him passes over as a motive power to other lives" (*Simpson*).—*In the midst of his brethren.* They may have thought that Samuel anointed David to be his successor as prophet, for it does not appear that Samuel told David or the others the object of the anointing. Josephus, however, says: "Samuel anointed him, and whispered in his ear, and acquainted him that God chose him to be king".—*The Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David.* "Not with stormful gust like that which swept over the soul of Saul when he met the children of the prophets, and which speedily passed away; but with the gentle silence of the opening dawn, which brightens into perfect day, the Spirit came into David's heart" (*W. M. Taylor*). *David* means *Beloved, Darling.*—*So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.* The sacrificial feast was probably held, though it is not recorded.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Fill thy horn with oil.* Few travelers return from Switzerland without a finely-polished drinking cup made from a ram's horn; such cups have been used from very ancient times, for the horns are hollow and are easily polished. The Greek word for *horn* may mean a trumpet or a drinking-horn, and the Latin word may mean a trumpet, an oil cruet, or a funnel. The horn in our text was a flask for oil. In the time of Solomon, a horn with its anointing oil was kept in the sanctuary, and with this Solomon was anointed king (1 Kings 1.39).

7. *The height of his stature.* Height and strength were regarded as belonging by right to royalty, says Kitto. When in battle much less depended on military

skill than upon the bodily prowess of the chief in single combats, or in the partial actions with which most battles commenced. It was natural that the people should take pride in the gigantic proportions of their leader, as calculated to strike terror into the enemy, and confidence into his followers; besides, it was no mean advantage that the crest of the leader should, from his tallness, be seen from afar by his people. The prevalence of this feeling of regard for personal bulk and stature is seen in the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, and even in the modern paintings of the last-named nation, in which the sovereign is invested with gigantic proportions in comparison with the persons around him.

Egyptian Representation of a Pharaoh's Gigantic Size

Euripides speaks of "a form worthy of a King". Emperor William of Germany seems to share in this feeling. His photographs are taken in such a way as to add to his height, and he is averse to being photographed standing beside the empress, for she is taller than he.

12. ***Arise, anoint him; for this is he.*** How contrary it was to the custom of oriental lands to choose the youngest son for preferment, Mrs. Ghosn el-Howie shows (in *Sunday School Times*). A native Syrian princess, with wealth and prestige, perceived that the younger of her two sons was in favor, and was about to be appointed sub-governor. "May it please thee," said she to the consul, "to appoint X—, the elder of the two?" "Only Allah could appoint him," was the rejoinder. Though X— was all but imbecile, yet the worthy lady would have preferred him because he was the elder of the two. Samuel and Jesse, like this princess, and all orientals, in fact,—would have chosen the eldest. As for the youngest, he would have been the very last to be considered.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Where is Bethlehem? What woman went with her family from Bethlehem to Moab? Who returned to Bethlehem with her? What vow did Ruth make? What did Ruth do in Bethlehem? Whom did she marry? What was her son called? Who was her grandson? Her great grandson? Tell how Saul came to Samuel and was anointed by him. Tell how Saul himself as a lad was called for a purpose by God.

After Saul's Rejection. All night long, we are told, Samuel cried unto the Lord when it first became known to him that Saul was not the man for the place to which he had been exalted. After his interview with Saul at Gilgal, Samuel realized that it was time to cease his mourning for Saul and take steps toward securing the right one to succeed the king when God should execute his judgment upon him. It was made known to him that one of the sons of Jesse, of the city of Bethlehem, was the right one for the Kingdom, "a man after God's own heart."

The Ancestry of David. David was the son of Jesse, the grandson of Obed, the great grandson of Ruth and Boaz. From his great grandmother Ruth, the Moabitess, and his ancestress Rahab of Jericho, there was alien blood in his veins. "It required three generations for the descendants of aliens to become members of Israel, and thus David could be reckoned a full Jew, though his father still stood in a measure outside the congregation;" says Dr. Geikie. "The family seems to have been, as it were, the feudal lord of the village and the district round it, for the elders of the country appear at the yearly feast of Jesse's household, and David in after years gave a grant of land in the neighborhood, as if his own right, to the son of his friend Barzillai."

Various dates are assigned for the year of David's birth. It is helpful to keep in mind that he lived about a thousand years before Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For Bethlehem see p. 103. For Ramah see p. 129. Samuel had a journey of twelve miles across the rugged hill-country of Judea, for Bethlehem lies twelve miles south of Ramah.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

"Are here all thy children?" If they are not here, why are they not? If seven-eighths of the members of your class are present today, are you well-content without finding out why the one-eighth is absent? Often one or more will be absent necessarily, but more often he could come and would come if you showed your interest in him, inquired about him, sent another pupil to tell him he is missed, or, better still, went yourself to his home or wrote him a letter. Many pupils never know how much their presence or absence concerns their teacher.

You should be solicitous not only for your pupils' attendance at Sunday-school, but for their attendance at Church as well. That day in Bethlehem the prophet Samuel summoned all the people to a sacrificial feast, a popular religious service, and in those days the children were a part of such gatherings. They still are in the Jewish synagogues of today. Their presence in the Christian churches also should be a matter of course. Children belong in the church with their parents, but if the parents of your pupils are indifferent, willing that their children shall attend or not as they please, yours is the opportunity of creating the desire.

Senior and even adult classes sometimes need a word of exhortation upon the subject of church attendance.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Joseph and David are by little children the best loved of all the Old Testament characters. You will have no difficulty in interesting them in the ten lessons of which David is the hero.

Today begin by recalling the story of Ruth. Years passed and Ruth became a mother, and then a grandmother, and then a great grandmother. It seems strange to think of the young girl as a great grandmother, doesn't it? But all grandmothers and great grandmothers were once as young as you are. And now do you want to learn about her great grandchildren? Jesse, her grandson, had the largest farm in Bethlehem. Some one whom you love was born in Bethlehem many years afterward; who is he? Bethlehem was the birthplace of the Christ Child. Jesse had eight sons and two daughters. The youngest of all the boys was a red-cheeked lad named David, and he must have been very dear to his father and mother for they named him David, and David means "the beloved", "the darling". All of their other seven boys had dark hair and eyes, as most boys in that country did, but this youngest boy had blue eyes and a fair skin and reddish or auburn hair.

When David was old enough to help his father his work was to take care of the sheep. One day when David was out on the hills wth his sheep a fine-appearing old man came to Bethlehem. Tell the story in dialogue form, and show Tissot's picture No. 79, Jesse presenting his sons to Samuel. In explaining the words of our Golden Text, use the illustration on page 179; showing a jar of goldfish. When David is brought in, speak of the wonder in the shepherd boy's face, for he does not know why the prophet wants to see him, and of his amazement when the oil is poured upon his head. Then he knows that God has chosen him for a special service. What shall it be?

After the feast Samuel went back to his home at Ramah, and David went back to his sheep. Often he must have thought (in Laura E. Cragin's words): "I wonder what great work I shall have to do? Sometime I may leave my sheep and these quiet fields and go among the people. Perhaps I shall be a soldier and fight the Lord's battles, or perhaps I shall be a prophet and tell others of the heavenly Father's love and goodness." I think sometimes he visited Samuel, and the old prophet told him how wonderfully God had led his people. Samuel must have taken great comfort in this brave, noble boy, and must have felt that he would make a better king than Saul.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When you look at Tom (or Mary), do you see him? You see his face; is that Tom? Do you see his spirit? Which is really Tom, his face or his spirit? What does the word *judge* mean? If Tom looks cheerful, do you think or judge him to be cheerful? Could your mother be

feeling sad over some great loss and yet keep a cheerful face? You might judge her to be happy, and you would be judging wrong. One's spirit can be seen only by God, so he only can always judge a person aright. What is our Golden Text? Who is the boy that we see judged today? What relation was he to Ruth the Moabitess?

For Older Pupils. The story of David occupies a greater space in the Old Testament than that of any other hero. In what books of the Bible is it found? It is a stirring story as you well know, for there was no monotony in David's life. Events followed close one upon another, alike when he was at Saul's court, in exile, and on the throne. What was David doing when first we hear of him?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Man's Judgment and God's

Man's Judgement from the Height of Stature. Saul, the first king of Israel, was tall and imposing, a head taller than all the people, while David, the second king, was short in stature, but in real worth Saul was to David as the buzzing of a fly to the peal of a full-toned organ. Samuel looked at Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, and was drawn to him because of his appearance; "Surely," he said to himself, "Jehovah's anointed is before him." Yet in some way he was made to realize that he was judging superficially, basing his verdict on Eliab's looks and on the height of his stature, and that God did not judge in this way, that man had regard to outward appearances, while God had regard to inward worth.

Paul was a little man, but in Chrysostom's words about him we see what was his stature in God's judgment: "This man of three cubits' height became tall enough to reach the third heaven."

"Pigmies are pigmies still; though perched on Alps;
And pyramids are pyramids in vales,
Each man makes his own stature, builds himself;
Virtue alone outbuilds the pyramids;
Her monuments shall last, when Egypt's fall—
'Tis mortal grandeur makes the mighty man."

Man's Judgment from Richness of Clothes. Man often judges another by the clothes he wears. As well might one expect a firefly to give forth heat because of its flashes of light, or an owl to utter words of wisdom because it looks so wise, as to expect a man to be superior in innate worth because he wears superior clothes. "The mair I gae aboot," wisely observes Jean Muckrose, "the mair I see that men are much alike, whether they stan' on the bare earth or on a pile o' siller, or wear a shepherd's plaid or a gown o' gold."

When Lord John Russell was Prime Minister of England he went to a telegraph office in a small village to send a message. The clerk saw only a little, old man in a great coat and rudely flung his message back to him saying, "Here, put your own name on it; it is a pity your master does not know how to send a telegram." The telegraph operator's eye saw only the great coat which he took to be that of a servant. "God's eye," says Jean Muckrose, "sees only the man inside o' the claithes."

God's Judgment of the Heart. I walked down the street of an Iowa city several years ago, and a physician asked me to visit his office. In company with a number of friends, I went to his office that evening to see the wonders of the X-ray machine. He handed me the strange-looking lenses, and I looked upon the bones of my friend, though covered with a veil of flesh. The tacks in his shoe sole seemed to hang in space; the bones of the foot were plain to my vision, aided by that powerful ray, but when I turned my attention to the vertebrae, I saw the ribs standing like grim specters, and when I reached the region of the heart, I saw the dim outline of a living, moving organ which meant life and action, and I trembled as I thought man has discovered a ray that reveals the vitals of a man in action; his heart is open for observation under that light. One step more and Divinity reads the sins of the heart. For the first time I understood the words, "God looketh upon the heart."—*French Oliver.*

Jehovah Seeth Not as Man Seeth. A teacher once held up a vase of water in which a goldfish was swimming about, and said to the children before him: "See the fish bite. Do you see him now?" "Yes, sir," the children shouted.

And as the goldfish moved in all directions, the question, "Do you see him now?" was repeated, to call forth the same eager reply: "Yes, sir." "Can't he hide from you?" asked the teacher. "No, sir," was the reply. "Why?" "Because we see through the glass." "So," said the teacher. "God sees right through our hearts. We cannot hide from him."

Whose Praise Shall We Seek? If this life be a stage and we be the players, with the world for spectators, then let us study our parts carefully, so that by our pose and speech we may every moment please our fellow-men, and earn their applause. Verily we shall have our reward. If this life be the school for the soul, and we be the sons of God, working and living continually in his presence, then let us not vex ourselves about the sound of our words upon our neighbors' ears, or the effect of our actions upon their judgment. Rather let us pray and strive that our inner self be cleansed from guile, possessed by love, and consecrated to the will of God. Whether men approve or condemn us it will be a light matter, for our judgment is with our Father which seeth in secret but rewardeth openly. *John Watson,* in *Inspiration.*

II Lives Set Apart

What David's Anointing Meant to Him. I can conceive of nothing to which a noble soul responds more profoundly than to the sense of being a selected life; a life chosen, set apart, exalted from the mass, specialized unto a purpose. In the hour of David's anointing it dawns upon him that his is a selected life—that he is set apart for an unusual destiny. What thought is greater than this to a soul that is noble? While we all know that there are and ever have been selected lives, and while we all recognize selection in others who by their gifts and callings and opportunities are manifestly set apart in the world as its leaders, there is much difficulty for many a noble soul in conceiving of itself as one of the called.

In every grouping of men there will be gradings of power—some men more evidently born for leadership than others. Even among the twelve Apostles there were gradings of power and a few natural leaders. Yet they were all called and selected and set apart by Christ to go out into the world and to spread the light of his coming up and down the world. *Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

Consecrated Lives. All the living members of a class that was graduated from Princeton College more than twenty years ago returned lately to visit their *Alma Mater,* and to talk over old times. After they had gone, a venerable doctor of divinity, who had been their tutor when they were students, said:

"I discovered one singular fact with regard to them. Among them were three men who, as boys, were full of enthusiasm, who believed that they were called to some special work in life, and who sacrificed everything else to that. They were the only men in their class who had made their mark on their generation.

One was an inventor, another a leader in a great reform movement, the third an author. Neither of the three had made money, or was reckoned, in the worldly sense of the word, a successful man; but they were the only ones who had strongly influenced their fellow-men.

In olden times men generally believed that God himself summoned them to a certain work or method of life. It was their "vocation" or "calling", because he called them to it. In these modern days men are apt to espouse the cause or take up the occupation which will pay best.

Sometimes, however, there still comes to a boy or man the conviction that a Power higher than the world, with its policy and expediency, is urging him into an untried path. If he is sure that he is right let him attempt it, fearing nothing. He will soon have a great following. The world in its ordinary movements is shrewd and mercenary; but in its heart it loves the man with a high purpose, and in the end is led by him. *Youth's Companion.*

III God is Seeking for Men who will Fulfill His Purpose

The Rejection of Saul. Before Saul was elected king, there were two parties in Israel. One was the religio-patriotic party, which naturally included the religious zealots found in the prophetic bands, enlightened seers like Samuel, the priests, and the more pious among the Israelites. In their minds Jehovah's interests and those of their race were synonymous; if the two seemed to conflict, they would unhesitatingly place those of Jehovah first. On their platform, as it was further developed, stood the later prophets. The other may be styled the political party. It included the nobles of Israel, the military class, and the less stable in the community, who were ready to gain their ends by fair means or foul. The movement toward national independence came from the religio-patriotic party. Saul, because of his personal ability, was called by them to lead it. The old proverb, "Is Saul among the prophets?" hints at the trouble. Impulsive, headstrong, superstitious rather than genuinely religious, he did not feel at home "among the prophets;" their demands seemed too high for their age. The principles which would appeal most strongly to Saul were those of the political party; to them he listened more and more. At a later period, in a fit of jealousy, he ordered the execution of all the priests of Nob. By this act he forever alienated the class in Israel which had called him to the throne. *Professor Kent* in *History of the Hebrew People.*

The Readiness of David to do God's Will. Through the whole of David's life before he becomes king he impresses you with the fact that he is devoid entirely of personal ambition as he is devoid of jealousy. There is no scheming for the crown, no shadow of disloyalty to the reigning monarch. All through the troubled years which intervene between the first anointing and his accession he seems willing to leave his life in God's hands; and though here and there his faith fails him and he gives way to gloomy fears, there is never any attempt, so far as we know, to take his affairs into his own hands and to control the will of God.

David furnishes you with an example of the fact that *real worth is discovered,* and the men for whom God has some work to do are found out. The history of humanity abounds with examples of this kind. Of men who were apparently effectually buried; born in obscure places, kept down and kept back by their seniors and their supposed superiors, pursued by the jealous hatred of those who dreaded them as rivals; misrepresented and maligned by unscrupulous enemies, and yet holding on their way and ultimately conquering, because they were faithful to duty, and their strength and their trust were in God. Could a man have been more effectually buried than David was? Everything was against him. The scullion of the family, relegated to the most despised tasks, and kept at them even when great occasions came. A buried genius! What chance was there for him? Yet you see him, in that obscure place all out of sight, imperiling his life for the sake of the sheep and saying nothing about it. And you see that all the powers in the world cannot ultimately keep him back. You see through all his life, so full of vicissitudes, the providence of God marvellously steering his course, turning evil into good, and making what is adverse a means of shaping him for the high destiny to which he has been called. *Condensed* from *The Birth of a Nation,* by *Charles Brown.*

God is Still Seeking for Men. Taking human life through, you are disposed to exclaim, How rarely God finds that which he seeks! How frequently men for whom God designs great things are unready when the call to them comes. Looking at human life through the medium of the history of Israel, how often men fail and disappoint God. How often, when they get into a position as Saul did, a great position with great possibilities, they fail to do God's will in it. Little bits of his will they will do, but not the whole of it! How rarely you will find a man devoted without reservation to the will of God. What a strain of perversity and distrust and self-will there is in our human nature! Here are men sore and resentful because they cannot get into a great position in law, in literature, in commerce, in the holy ministry. And here are men who when they have got these, develop vanity and pride and selfishness and folly and the characteristics that make human life hideous. The great thing that God was seeking in Israel was a man who would do all his will. He has been seeking such men ever since through all the weary centuries. He seeks them still. Shall

he find them in us? In position lofty and lowly, in work called secular or sacred, in obscurity or prominence, who will be plastic to the Divine hand, amenable to the holy guidance, obedient to the heavenly vision?

The path of him who will say "Yes" will not be easy; but you do not want an easy path. It will be far better—a path lighted up with the glory of the approbation of God. He is waiting for those who will say, in the spirit of Jesus, it will be sweeter than the music of angels: "I delight to do thy will, O my God."—*Charles Brown,* in *The Birth of a Nation.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Are you misled by appearances? Do you base your opinion of others upon their outward circumstances, their social standing, their reputation? As you must judge yourself by inward worth, so you should endeavor to judge others by the same true standard.

If it were possible, would you wish others to know you as God knows you?

Our Prayer: O thou who understandest our thought, who art acquainted with all our ways, help us to live so as to be approved by thee. Others know what we seem to be, but thou knowest what we are. We would be worthy of being called like David one after thine own heart, because we seek to do thy will. Teach us how to live, how to serve thee, that we may one day hear thee say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

To what extent may we be governed by expediency? Was Samuel's course at Bethlehem a subterfuge allowable in those days, or was it right according to the Christian standards? See "The Boundaries of Truth," *Atlantic Monthly,* Oct., 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is the meaning of "still waters"? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 182.) 2. For what does the Hebrew word for "soul" stand? (*Guide,* p. 182.) 3. What does "for his name's sake" mean? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 182.) 4. What is meant by "the valley of the shadow of death"? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 182.) 5. From what evils does an eastern shepherd have to guard his sheep? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 182.) 6. What uses have the eastern shepherd's rod and staff? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 183.) 7. What is the explanation of the first clause of verse 5 given by "The Syrian Guest"? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 183.) 8. What is the explanation of the second clause? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 184.) 9. What is meant by the "house of the Lord"? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 184.) 10. Who wrote the twenty-third Psalm? (*Guide,* p. 184.) 11. What three interpretations of its meaning are given? (*Guide,* p. 184.) 12. On what occasion did a host fail to show respect to Jesus as his guest by anointing his head with oil, and offering him water for his feet, and how did Jesus rebuke him? 13. Tell the parable of the lost sheep. (Lk. 15.3-7.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What does the word *Psalter* mean? 2. The ancient Greeks called their kings "shepherd of the People": why? 3. What was the occupation of Abraham? 4. Of Isaac? 5. Of Jacob? 6. What was Moses doing when he saw the bush that burned yet was not consumed? 7. What is one of the tenderest sayings of Christ in regard to himself? (Jn. 10.11.) 8. Does "I shall not want" mean that one who trusts God will never suffer deprivation? (Phil. 4.11, 12; and *Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 182.) 9. What is the literal and what the spiritual meaning of verse 3? 10. What words of the Psalm express faith? 11. Eternal happiness? 12. Peace? 13. Contentment? 14. Fearlessness? 15. Restoration? 16. Guidance? 17. Abundance?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory the Twenty-third Psalm and the Parable of The Lost Sheep. If you already know these, commit to memory the two hymns beginning "He leadeth me" and "The King of Love my Shepherd is". Begin a Life of David. Today write Part I, David the Shepherd Boy Anointed King.

LESSON III—APRIL 18

THE SHEPHERD PSALM

Golden Text

Jehovah is my Shepherd. Psalm 23.1

LESSON Psalm 23 MEMORIZE Psalm 23

1 Jehovah is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

Note. A knowledge of shepherd life in the East is so essential to the understanding of this Psalm, that our section "Light from Oriental Life" is here incorporated.

1. *Jehovah is my shepherd. The Lord governs me,* Vulgate Version. I am the Good Shepherd, John 10.11.—*I shall not want.* Dr. Briggs translates this, I have no want: "The imperfect is not future, but a present of habitual experience." This does not mean that the Psalmist will never suffer deprivation, but that he will not be without that which is good for him, because the Divine Shepherd, like the human shepherd, cares for the needs of his flock. I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content (*Paul*). Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat, or What shall we drink? or Wherewith shall we be clothed? (*Christ*).

2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.* In the noonday heat; see the Song of Solomon, 1.7.—*He leadeth me.* See Ps. 77.20; 78.52; 80.1. There are no fenced-in pastures in the East where sheep can be left to take care of themselves, and the shepherd is always with them.—*Beside still waters.* Hebrew, *waters of rest,* RVm. Unto refreshing waters, is Dr. Briggs' translation. There are few streams in the grazing lands of Palestine which are not dry in the summer months, and by "the still waters" the Psalmist thinks of wells or fountains. Compare Rev. 7.17.

3. *He restoreth my soul; he guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* The Hebrew word translated *soul* means *life:* see Psalm 19.7. *Name* stands for *self, character: for his name's sake* means *in accordance with his own character.* See 1 S. 12.22; Ps. 106.8; 1 Jn. 2.12. In this verse the literal and spiritual meanings are closely blended. The Psalmist seems to think of the shepherd finding the wandering sheep and leading them back into right and safe paths, and also of the life of the soul as beset with perils and temptations from which it only can be safe under the Divine guidance. And God restores the soul that has strayed from righteousness, not because that soul is deserving of such mercy, but "for his name's sake", because of his infinite pity and compassion.

4. *Yea.* More than this (which has just been said).—*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.* Or, *deep darkness,* RVm. See Jer. 13.16; Amos 5.8. I have seen the deep, narrow gorges of the hill country of Judah, which are dark and gloomy, and abound in caves where wild beasts or robbers might dwell, and can understand how the Psalmist might speak of them as "the valley of the shadow of death."—*I will fear no evil.* "Sometimes a heavy fog settles in the valley like a veil, hiding the shepherd from his sheep. Poor sheep! they have lost sight of their shepherd, but he makes his presence known to everyone. He calls, 'Taa, Taa, Ho, Ho, Ho!' and at once they realize that he is there. By and by, as the fog begins to disappear, the moon sends her light down through the hills. Then, if the shadow of the rocks and trees

frightens the sheep, the voice of the shepherd, acting like magic, quiets them. Watch! a shadow moves. The shepherd watches its movements, too, and taking his sling in his right hand hurls a stone at the enemy, the wolf. But while the shepherd is engaged in warding off a wolf from the front, another, which has been lurking behind the rock, suddenly springs forth and bounds into the very midst of the flock. The sheep become frightened and scatter in all directions. The shepherd's first thought is to gather his flock. He quickly climbs up on to a rock where all can see him, and calls, 'Taa, Taa! Ho! Ho!' Though the wolf is in their midst and has sunk his teeth in the side of some poor lamb, the sheep are not afraid; they seem oblivious to the fact because the familiar voice of the shepherd brings with it courage. Having successfully gathered his sheep, the shepherd immediately crushes the head of the wolf with his rod" (*Faddoul Moghabgab,* in *The Shepherd Song*).—*For thou art with me.* "As the flock journeys on, the leaders will be seen looking up to the shepherd, while the others follow with heads down to the footing, so that you see, for the most part, their bodies only. But let some alarm be heard—some disturbance break out, some hurt befall—at once all heads are lifted, all looking, looking not at the danger, but at the shepherd. Oh, think of this way of peace when all is going well, this way of trust when trouble comes—this lifting of the eyes to the shepherd" (*William Allen Knight*).—*Thy rod and thy staff.* These are two implements which every shepherd carries. "The shepherd's dress consists of an unbleached calico shirt, gathered in at the waist by a strong, red leather belt. Hung to the belt, the 'leathern girdle' of Scripture, besides his rude clasp-knife and small leather pouch, or 'scrip', is a formidable weapon of defence, a stout bludgeon used to protect himself and his charge from assailants. It is generally made of oak, is about two feet long, and often has a large number of heavy iron nails driven into its rounded head, which render it a very deadly arm. Sometimes it is fashioned from a species of willow which is peculiarly light, and at the same time exceedingly tough and strong. The club is easily attached to the belt, being furnished with a noose of cord passed through a hole in the end by which it is grasped. The staff is generally a straight, strong rod. Its use answers to the English shepherd's crook, to guide the sheep, to recover them from danger, to rule the stragglers into order, and at times to chastise the wilful" (*James Neil*).

The Club

The Shepherd with Staff, Knife and Club

4. *They comfort me.* Give me a feeling of security in thy presence. "Ah, you should see the sheep cuddle near the shepherd to understand that word, 'they comfort me!' The shepherd's call, 'Ta-a-a, ho-o-o' and the answering patter of feet as the sheep hurry to him, are fit sounds to be chosen out of the noisy world to show what comfort God gives to souls that heed his voice" (*Knight*). He is the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. 1.3.

5. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.* Many see here a change of the figure of speech, Jehovah is no longer the Shepherd but the host; many have pointed out that the situation is that of David before Barzillai, 2 S. 17. 27-29. Dr. Briggs explains that he has "guest-right with Jehovah. He is safe and secure, because, in accordance with oriental customs, the host is obliged to protect him against all enemies, at all costs." On the other hand, one can see in this verse also the figure of Jehovah as shepherd still carried out, "that keynote never lost till the plaintive melody dies at the song's end, all that follows being that one thought put in varying light." From the "Syrian Guest" I condense this explanation: "Ah, to think that the shepherd's highest skill and heroism should be lost from view as the Psalm

begins to sing of it, and only an indoor banquet thought of! The word for table here means simply 'something spread out' and a prepared meal. There are many poisonous plants in the grass and the shepherd must find and avoid them. There are snake holes in some kinds of ground, and, if they be not driven away, the snakes bite the noses of the sheep. The shepherd somtimes burns the fat of hogs along the ground to do this. Sometimes the shepherd finds ground moles have worked their holes just under the surface. Snakes lie in these holes with their heads sticking up ready to bite the grazing sheep. The shepherd knows how to drive them away as he goes along ahead of the sheep. And around the feeding-ground, in holes and caves in the hillsides there are jackals and wolves, hyenas, and panthers, and the bravery and skill of the shepherd are at the highest point in closing up these dens with stones or slaying the wild beasts with his long-bladed knife."

5. *Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.* If the Psalmist is thinking of a host, this would be the mark of courtesy to a guest: see Lk. 7.46. On the theory that the thought is still of Jehovah as shepherd Mr. Knight explains the orientalism as follows: "At the door of the sheep-fold the sheep stand and 'the rodding of the sheep' takes place. With his rod he holds back the sheep while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive-oil and he has cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks or a side scratched by thorns. And here comes one that is simply worn and exhausted; he bathes its face and head with the refreshing olive-oil and takes the large two-handled cup and dips it brimming full from the vessel of water provided for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink."

6. *Surely.* Or, *Only,* RVm.—*Goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life.* Goodness and lovingkindness are here personified: they follow, pursue the Psalmist. Despite the valley of the shadow and the evil which comes into every one's life, goodness and lovingkindness do pursue the righteous, for he can say—

"The king of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever."

The house of the Lord. Some scholars maintain that this implies the existence of the temple, and therefore the Psalm could not have been written by David: the language is figurative, however, and it does not refer to the temple necessarily.—*For ever.* Hebrew, *for length of days,* RVm.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Authorship of the Twenty-Third Psalm. The Psalm is entitled: "Jehovah the Psalmist's Shepherd. A Psalm of David." Yet we have no positive proof that this Sheperd Psalm comes from the pen of David, for the titles of the Psalms, as they stand in our Bibles, were probably not originally a part of them, but were added by very early scholars as their opinion in regard to their authorship and character. But whatever we may be told about its authorship, we can never disassociate it from David, the shepherd lad who was tending his sheep on the hills of Bethlehem when the prophet Samuel came to anoint him king. Its beautiful imagery would come naturally to him, and it seems to breathe the very spirit of his early life. Long years afterward when the shepherd lad was king of Israel, he felt that what he had once been to the flocks committed to his care, that and much more, the Divine Shepherd had been to him. It was a great thought, and inspired thought, that came to him when he said, *Jehovah* is *my* Shepherd, and this is the keynote of the whole Psalm.

The Interpretation of the Psalm. There are several ways in which this Psalm may be understood.

Dr. C. A. Briggs in the International Commentary calls it a Guest Psalm and finds three strophes, each with its own simple and beautiful imagery to set forth the central idea of the Psalm. He thinks it a mistake to suppose that the theme of the shepherd extends beyond the first strophe: the new and

parallel figure of the guide takes the people to the same safety to which the shepherd had taken his sheep already in the first strophe. The Psalm expresses calm confidence in Jehovah: (1) as Shepherd, providing his sheep with plentiful pasture and water, 1-3a; (2) as Guide, conducting his companion safely in right paths through a gloomy ravine, 36-4; (3) as Host, anointing his guest for a banquet and granting him perpetual hospitality, 5-6.

By many the Psalm is thought of as containing two themes; (1) Jehovah as Shepherd, 1-4; (2) Jehovah as Host, 5-6. It is said strikingly to befit David's situation in the forest of Hareth. To this forest he had come at the suggestion of the prophet Gad, after having hidden in several places to escape the anger of Saul, his pursuer. Before this, David had been living and enduring many privations in the Cave of Adullam, and now, on entering the Forest of Hareth, and beholding the green leaf, the tender grass, and the rippling stream, he felt his soul restored, and he grasped a loftier conception of the providence of God.

The simplest interpretation, I think, is the best. The Psalm has but one theme, "Jehovah is my Shepherd." It befits the experiences of David and of every one who is very sure of God, of a Personal God whose care is unceasing and whose love is with him throughout the length of days.

An Appreciation of the Psalm. Henry Ward Beecher calls this "The Nightingale of Psalms." He says: It has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy greater than the heart can conceive. It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. It has made the dying slave freer than his master and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind. Nor is its work done. It will go on singing through all the generations of time, nor will it fold its wings till time is ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical for ever.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

To his pupils the teacher is shepherd and guide. He must accept responsibility for his flock. His shepherding must be careful and unremitting, wise and tender. He must know what are the pitfalls in their way—their temptations; what is to them the valley of the shadow—their sorrows. He must, above all, lead them to the Great Shepherd.

The true shepherd's heart is with his sheep, if one is lost he will seek until he finds it. Possibly ninety per cent of the pupils who have been lost to the school and the church could have been kept had the teachers been vigilant and tactful.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

That your pupils need to be taken care of, and that God takes care of them as a shepherd takes care of his sheep, are thoughts which this Psalm has for your pupils. Study carefully the "Words and Phrases Explained," especially all the explanations of the ways of Eastern shepherds, till you can make the scenes live before your pupils—the morning pasturing, the noonday rest, the evening folding. This is the interesting way in which Laura E. Cragin (in "Old Testament Stories") begins:

"David had a harp on which he used to play. It was not large, like the ones you see now, but was a little one which he could easily carry. Perhaps he tried to imitate the music of the birds' songs or the sound the wind made as it whistled through the trees, or he played the songs and hymns which he had heard sung, and the sheep and lambs liked his music.

But David could not spend all of his time playing on his harp, as he had hard work to do in caring for his sheep. Sometimes wild animals crept near the flocks and David had to drive them away. Would you not be greatly frightened to see a lion or a bear coming towards you? Once a lion came to the sheep which David was watching and seized one of the

little lambs. But instead of running away in terror, David caught and killed the lion and saved the little creature from death. Another time he killed a bear, and in that country bears were even fiercer than lions.

Often he stayed out on the hills all night, caring for the sheep, and then he used to look up at the stars and remember the loving heavenly Father who made them. Sometimes great storms came up and then David led his flocks into a cave in the rocks. There he watched how the branches of the trees were tossed about by the wind and how sometimes they were broken off and fell to the ground with a crash. He saw the lightning flash and heard the thunder roll, but he and the sheep were safe in the shelter of the rock.

When David was a man, he wrote some beautiful songs, called Psalms, which we now love to read. In them he tells us of his thoughts when he was a shepherd boy. In one he says: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (That is, when he looked up at the sky and saw the moon and the stars, which God had made, they appeared so large and so wonderful that it seemed strange to him that the heavenly Father should think also of men.) But God made men, he says, almost like angels, and gave them this beautiful world in which to live. And as he thought of these things, he thanked the dear Father for all his goodness.

Another time, as he remembered his life among the sheep, he thought, "Just as I took care of the sheep and the dear little lambs, so God takes care of me." And then he wrote a beautiful song which perhaps some of you know, and which I hope you all will learn. It begins, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

If you have time, talk about the Savior who is called the Good Shepherd, and tell them about the little shepherd boy whom a missionary found out in the fields with his flock. The lad had his eyes closed and he was saying over the letters of the alphabet. The missionary asked him why he was doing this, and the boy replied: "Because I don't know any prayers, and I want the Good Shepherd to take care of me and my sheep. So I thought if I said the alphabet over he could take the letters and put them together for himself into a prayer." Don't you think this pleased the Good Shepherd?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What does the word Psalter mean? This word was given out in a spelling lesson at school and every one missed save the last boy. But when he was asked to define it, he answered, "More salt"! Who wrote the Psalms that compose the Psalter?

For Older Pupils. There are so many expressions in the Bible which can not be understood unless we are familar with Eastern scenes and customs. The Shepherd Psalm which we study today loses all its beauty and impressiveness unless we can picture to ourselves the life of a Syrian shepherd and his "beautiful way" with his flock. I have seen the shepherd alone with his flock on the Judean hills, far off from any human habitation, and I no longer wonder that there exists between him and the dumb animals under his care almost human friendship, he looking upon them with the most solicitous regard, and they looking up to him as their provider and protector. I have seen the glaring, ofttimes almost barren, boundless wilderness which is the Syrian pasture land, and is so different from our fenced-in fields or hillsides where the sheep are left to themselves, and I know that the sheep could not exist there without the shepherd. I have experienced the scorching noonday heat in Syria, and I can appreciate the shepherd's care and skill in leading his flock where there is fresh herbage or fresh water. In Nablous I have heard the hyenas and wolves howling at night and I can understand the Psalmist's words, Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. And I have looked down into dark, rocky defiles and gloomy gorges of deep darkness as night begins to fall, and I wonder not that the Easterner, who, unlike ourselves, does not delight in wild scenery, has named them "valleys of shadow of death." The keynote of our Psalm is in the first sentence, *Jehovah* is my *shepherd.*

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Jehovah is my Shepherd

"I Never S'poses." "An old negress made a precarious living by daily labor, but was an earnest, happy Christian. A friend who disapproved of her constant cheerfulness, said, 'Why, auntie, you are all right now, but suppose you should be sick, or lose your employment, or—' 'Stop,' said the old woman, 'I never s'poses. The Lord is my Shepherd; and I knows I shall not want. Better give them s'poses up and trust the Lord."

Jehovah Is. Not *was,* not *may be,* nor *will be,* "The Lord *is* my shepherd," —is on Sunday, is on Monday, and is through every day of the week; is in January, and is in December, and in every month of the year; is at home, and is in China; is in peace, and is in war; in abundance, and in penury. *J. Hudson Taylor.*

How Jesus Matched the Twenty-Third Psalm. Man sings, "The Lord is my shepherd," and the Saviour says, "I am the good Shepherd"—twice he says that, as if to make sure it is heeded. Man sings, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," and the Saviour says his sheep go in and out and find pasture, under his care. Man sings how his shepherd leads him by still waters in right paths. Again the Saviour matches the song, telling how he leads his sheep out, and goes before them while they follow, knowing his voice.

Then, when the song turns to "the valley of the shadow", when its tenderest music is full-heavy with memories of gloom and peril, man sings of the shepherd's goodness even there, of his care by rod and staff, by food and oil and cup; and naught in the song is more sweet than when he sings, "I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." Ah, does the Saviour match that? He declares that he will not leave his sheep, will not flee, even when the wolf comes to snatch and scatter—'tis the scene of gloom and death, the same as in the Psalm!—but he will stay by like the good shepherd that he is, and will lay down his life for the sheep.

Then the man's song breaks into the gladness of full assurance. "Surely", it sings, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." The Saviour seems to match this very word—all is sure indeed! "I know mine own, and mine own know me, and I lay down my life for my sheep."

The song ends with the peace of the folding-time, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Ah, 'tis a bonny thing to see how the Saviour of us all makes response to that! "Other sheep I have," says he, "which are not of this fold"—this fold where all is well under his care. 'Tis the safety and comfort of the fold he is thinking of, the same as in the song's ending. Only he goes beyond the Psalm now! His heart goes out to the sheep not folded, to those still wandering out in the wild—bleating, lost. They, too, are his; them also must he bring in; there shall be one flock, one shepherd. For the shepherd's goodness goes even beyond the trust of those safe-folded!

Do you not see how 'tis like heaven's response to this sweetest song of trust ever sung? *William Allen Knight,* in *The Shepherd of Jebel Nur.*

II In the Valley of the Shadow

Thy Rod and Thy Staff they Comfort Me. At my father's house in the country there is a little closet in the chimney corner where were kept the canes and walking-sticks of several generations of our family. In my visits to the old house, when my father and I are going out for a walk, we often go to the cane closet, and pick out our sticks to suit the fancy of the occasion. In this I have frequently been reminded of the saying that the Word of God is a staff. How often have I selected from the armory of the Interpreter a text suited to the present exigency!

During the war, when the season of discouragement and impending disaster was upon us, the verse, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord," was a staff to walk with, many dark days. When death took away our child and left us almost broken-hearted, I found another staff in the promise that "Though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh

in the morning." When in impaired health, I was exiled for a year, not knowing whether I should be permitted to return to my home and my work again, I took with me this staff which never failed: "He knoweth the thought that he thinketh toward thee, thoughts of peace and not of evil." In times of special danger or doubt, when human judgment has seemed to be set at naught, I have found it easy to go forward with this staff: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." And in emergencies, when there has seemed to be no adequate time either for deliberation or for action, I have never found that this staff has failed me: "He that believeth shall not make haste." *Benjamin Vaughan Abbott,* in *The Outlook.*

The Psalm which Sings in the Night. When the darkness steals over human life and plunges the soul into midnight, this "nightingale of psalms" begins to sing. The night draws out the music. We never hear the music of this Psalm in the daytime, when our sky is brimming with light. We may see the literary beauty of the Psalm, all the grace of its imagery, but we do not hear the exquisiteness of its song, the tender sweetness of its message. We shall hear that in the night, when the literary beauties are secondary, and the message of the song is all in all.

It is the one Psalm which above all others makes music in the night of death. I have been there when it was sung to the dying, and their faces have brightened as though they were listening to the songs of heaven, the birds of the eternal spring. Let me counsel you, when the clouds are over your life, when the sunlight has gone, when the night is round about you, to turn to the sweet singer; it will fill your darkness with music, and turn the night time into a sanctuary of praise. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in a *Sermon.*

III The Overflowing Cup

My Cup Runneth Over. When a man puts a meter on his water pipe he is careful to turn on only a small stream of water and to shut it off before dark. But when God makes a fountain he turns a Niagara over its beetling cliffs and lets it pour for unnumbered centuries.

That nation is poor and that man is poor who only raises enough corn and wheat for himself. And God himself would be poor if, when I asked him for something, he only gave me just what I asked for. I never had a prayer answered that way in my life. He gives me more than I ask or can ever think of. *Dr. Robert J. Burdette.*

Surely Goodness and Loving Kindness shall Follow me all the Days of my Life.

Every morning seems to say:
"There's something happy on the way,
And God sends love to you!" *Dr. Henry van Dyke.*

Our Responsibility. God fills the cup, but have we no responsibility in regard to it? Must we not keep our cup turned upward? Suppose the flowers turned their cups downward, when the dew or rain falls, instead of allowing the drops to collect in them and then slowly trickle down to their roots, what would be the result? Soon we should find them withered and dead. God gives to him that asketh.

Suppose we grumble because some one has a larger and handsomer cup than we have, or suppose we throw our cup down in disappointment because, though it is full, we would prefer to have it filled with something else, do we deserve another one? Contentment comes through the grateful use and enjoyment of what we have. "Do not let the empty cup be your first teacher of the blessings you had when it was full;" counsels Dr. Maclaren. "Seek, as a plain duty, to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life."

And our responsibility to others is beautifully told in these stanzas from *The British Congregationalist*:

God has dipped deep thy cup into his spring,
Which drippeth over, it is so well filled;

Lend it to some parched life, and let it bring
Laughter and song to voices drought has stilled.

God gave to thee his only well-loved Christ,
Whose steps have smoothed the road that leads thee home;
Tell those whose road is rough, whose way is missed,
That he has called all weary ones to come.

For Ever. The protecting presence is not to be enjoyed only here. Not alone here is the table spread and the full cup of joy presented to our lips. On the other side, too, God waits; and amidst all the novelty of experience beyond death, amidst all changed, unimaginable conditions, faith confidently grasps one hope, that the God known here will be more fully known there; so that the spirit shall serve him with larger freedom: I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. *J. H. Rushbrooke,* in *The Shepherd Psalm.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Jehovah is *my* shepherd; he maketh *me* to lie down; he leadeth *me;* he guideth *me:* can we say these words with our heart as well as with our lips?

Our Prayer: Thou, who turnest the shadow of death into the morning, make it morning in our hearts—the morning of readiness to be Divinely visited by whatever arrives; the morning of that inward having, the having of pure desire and pure intent, of faith and hope and charity, to which much is given that would not else be received. Make us glad to be, with the gladness that is strength, saying to ourselves that life is beautiful for all its glooms and great for all its pettiness; that this which is now is good, yet there is better than this, and that this house of ours, large or narrow, handsome or mean, is the House of the Lord wherein we may find him who hides to be found. Grant us to eat our nourishing at thy table spread in the wilderness and to be feeding others the while with strengthening food by the life which we live in their midst, ministering ever the silent, subtle ministry of gracious ways and fine behavior. *S. T. Tipple.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Twenty-third Psalm interpreted.
2. The Psalms. (See pp. 49-54 of this *Guide.*)
3. The Valley of the Shadow. See "Light in Darkness," *Outlook,* March 23, 1912.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the entire seventeenth chapter. 2. Describe the location of the two camps. (*Guide,* p. 193.) 3. What was Goliath's height? (*Guide,* p. 195.) 4. Describe Goliath's armor. 5. Describe David's sling, and its use. (*Guide,* p. 192.) 6. How skilful were the Benjaminites with the sling, as told in Judges 20.16? 7. What explanation is given in 1 S. 13.19-23 for the fact that all the Israelites at this time were not skilled in the use of swords and spears? 8. What adventure had David had with a lion? Why did Goliath add the threat in verse 44? (*Guide,* p. 192.) 9. What colloquy in the Iliad may be compared with this between Goliath and David? (*Guide,* p. 191.) 10. What trophy did David bring Saul? (1 S. 17.54-57.) 11. What did David do with Goliath's sword and under what circumstances did he later use it? (1 S. 21.8-10.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why could not David wear Saul's armor? 2. Why do orientals regard the calling of another a dog as the strongest expression of contempt? (*Guide,* p. 191.) 3. What does the verb "slang" mean? 4. Why did David aim at Goliath's forehead? 5. Which verse is parenthetical? 6. Why are David's words not mere bravado? 7. Why was David not afraid to fight Goliath? 8. What is courage? 9. What two kinds of courage are there? 10. How would you define moral courage? (The ancient Greeks defined courage as facing danger, unpleasantness or pain, in devotion to something which one considers right. That defines moral courage as well as physical.)

Note-Book Work. In your Life of David write Part II, David as Poet. At the close write the Shepherd Psalm from memory.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

Golden Text

If God is for us, who is against us? Romans 8.31

LESSON 1 Samuel 17.1-54: verses 38-51 printed
MEMORIZE verse 45

38 And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. 39 And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. 40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. 43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. 45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day unto the birds of the heavens, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hand. 48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine rose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

38. *Saul clad David with his apparel.* The garment worn under the coat of mail. David was called a stripling in verse 56, but he must have been full-grown at this time, about twenty years old it is believed, or he could not have put Saul's armor on at all. Saul, however, was exceptionally tall, 10.23.—*Helmet . . coat of mail.* See p. 191.

39. *He assayed to go.* He tried to walk.—*For he had not proved it.* See 1. Thess. 5.21. David was not accustomed to heavy armor, and could not walk under such a weight.—*David put them off him.* See 1 Cor. 1.27; 2 Cor. 10.4. "He desired to go forth to the battle in the lightest possible armor; strong in the Lord, not in himself; armed not with steel but with faith" (*Augustine,* quoted by Kirkpatrick).

40. *His staff.* See ¶ 1, p. 183.—*Brook.* Or *Torrentbed,* RVm. The brook was probably dry at this time.—*Even in his wallet.* The name by which the shepherd's bag was called. It was made of a whole skin of a kid, and was carried slung over his shoulder, or hanging at his side.—*His sling was in his hand.*

See p. 192. The Israelites were all skilled in the use of slings and bows and arrows: the reason they were not skilled in the use of swords is recorded in 1 S. 13.19-23.

41. *The Philistine came on.* His height is given in verse 4: about nine feet nine. Matthew Henry calls him "a stalking mountain overlaid with brass and iron".—*The man that bare the shield.* See p. 150.

43. *Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?* David carried a staff, verse 40, instead of a sword: staves were weapons used against beasts, not men. To call another a dog is the strongest term of contempt, 2 K. 8.13. (See p. 192).—*Cursed David by his gods.* "Making use of the name of Jehovah in his cursing, and thus defying not David only, but the God of Israel also" (*Delitzsch*).

44. *And the Philistine said to David, Come to me.* "As modern warfare is conducted, such a colloquy as this between combatants seems to be ridiculous; but every one who is familiar with Homer's Iliad will see a wonderful similarity between the speeches of Goliath and David and those which the father of poetry puts into the mouths of his heroes in similar circumstances. See in particular, the speeches of Glaucus and Diomede in the sixth book of the Iliad. 'Come hither', says Glaucus, 'that you may quickly reach the goal of death'" (*W. M. Taylor*). Compare also Hector's threat in the thirteenth book of the Iliad.—*I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens.* See p. 192.

45-47. David's reply begins with an allusion to the Philistine's superiority in arms, as compared with the club (staff) to which he has made scornful allusion. Yet as contrasted with the sword and spear and javelin, David feels himself armed with the name of the Lord of Hosts, "God of the ranks of Israel which thou hast insulted this day. David's confidence overtops that of the Philistine. The boast of the giant is thrown back at him. The result: all the earth shall know that Israel has a God—something of which the heathen are not yet convinced" (*Smith*).—*Defied.* Or, *reproached,* RVm.—*This day.* Immediately.—*The battle is Jehovah's.* Zech. 4.6.

49. *Slang.* Hurled.—*Smote the Philistine in his forehead.* The forehead was the only part of the giant unprotected. When engaged in warfare, it would be protected by the shield. Judges 20.16 tells us that the Benjaminites, seven hundred chosen men, could sling a stone at a hair-breadth and not miss their aim. With what force the stone was hurled is seen in the statement that it sank into the forehead. We are told that slingers from the Balearic Islands could pierce shields and helmets with stones.

50. This verse interrupts the story, and should be read as a parenthesis. It is lacking in one version.

51. *And slew him.* The stone had only stunned the giant.—*Champion.* Or, *mighty man,* RVm.—*Was dead.* See ¶ 1, p. 194.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Assyrian Coat of Mail

38. *He put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail.* As portrayed in ancient sculptures, the helmet looks like a row of feathers set on a band of metal, with metal scales hanging from it to protect the back of the neck and sides of the face. The coat of mail reached to the knees or lower, and was made of overlapping metal plates.

39. *His sword.* The Egyptian sword was short and straight, two and a half to three feet long and double-edged. The handle was plain and hollowed in the center, the better to afford a strong grasp. The Hebrew sword probably resembled it. *Freeman.*

40. *His sling was in his hand.* The sling was made of leather, or of plaited work of wool, rushes, hair, or sinews. The middle part, where the stone

lay, was called the cup, for the sling gradually narrowed toward the extremities, so that it could be easily handled. In the Egyptian sling, which probably was the same as the Hebrew, there was a loop at one end which was placed over the thumb, in order to retain the weapon when the stone was hurled and the other end became free. The sling was used by shepherds to keep the beasts of prey from the flock, and also to keep the sheep from straying. In war it was the favorite weapon in skillful hands. In using the sling, the stone was put into the broad, hollowed part, the ends were grasped together in the hands, and after a few whirls around the head to give impetus, the stone was discharged, frequently with force enough to penetrate the helmet or shield. *Freeman, Handbook.*

The Earliest Representation of David
From The Roman Catacombs

Playing with slings and stones is a favorite pastime for boys in Palestine today. A traveler noticed that several boys had severe burns on their wrists, and inquiring the cause was told that these burns were self-inflicted because the boys had a superstitious notion that burning the wrist would give them skill in throwing accurately!

43. *Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?* The Eastern dog is the public scavenger; he is dirty, and repulsive, owns no master but roams freely about the streets, and is kicked about and treated as a nuisance. The staff which the shepherd carries he uses for a support in climbing hills, for driving the sheep out from the low bushes where they stray, and also for keeping the shepherd dogs in subjection. It is to this last use that Goliath refers. A further explanation of his words is given by Roberts in his "Oriental Illustrations": Men of high caste will not strike those of low caste with the hand, because the touch would defile them; they therefore beat them with a stick or other weapon. To offer to strike any person with a stick, then, is very provoking, and the person so struck will ask, "Am I a dog?"

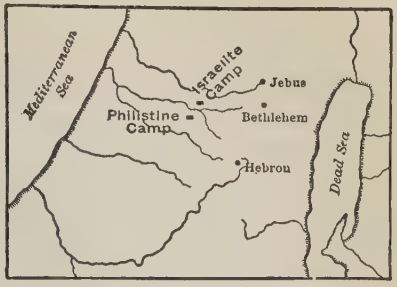
44. *I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field.* By the Jews and by all oriental people not to be buried after death was considered one of the greatest dishonors that could befall one. In Deuteronomy 28.26 it is said that one of the fearful consequences of disobedience to God's law, will be that "Thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away." When the seven sons of Saul were hung by the Gibeonites, Rizpah, the mother of two of them, remained by the bodies "from the beginning of harvest till water was poured upon them from heaven," and "suffered neither the birds of the heavens to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

It is said that the threat of Goliath is still in Palestine a favorite way of terrifying an enemy. "Begone, or I will give thy flesh to the jackals." "The crows shall have thy carcass." "Yes, the teeth of the dogs shall soon have hold of thee." "The eagles are ready."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How did a Philistine garrison mock two Israelites who came to face them? How did Gideon show great bravery? How did Ruth? The boy Samuel? Saul? Jonathan? How is David described when Samuel first saw him? What was David's occupation? What did Samuel do to him? What are the words in which Gideon ascribed his victory to Jehovah? When has Saul ascribed to God his victory? Give Jonathan's words at Michmash in which he speaks of Jehovah as working for them.

Israelites and Philistines meet for Battle: Goliath's Challenge. Again we hear of Israel being engaged in warfare with the Philistines. On opposite heights of the valley of Elah, the two armies were encamped. For forty days, every morning and every evening, a Philistine giant named Goliath had stood forth and challenged the Israelites to settle the matter by a single combat, saying; "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." And this was to be the result of the combat: "If he is able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us." Saul and all Israel were dismayed. When the Israelites saw Goliath approaching they fled.



Location of the Two Camps

The Two Accounts of David's Introduction to Saul's Court. David's three oldest brothers had joined Saul's army, and their father sent David to them with a large quantity of parched grain, bread and cheese. On hearing about the giant's challenge, David asked, "Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" His brother Eliab heard David talking with the warriors and spoke angrily and scornfully to him, reminding him that for all his pride he was but a shepherd. David continued to talk with the men, and his willingness to fight with the giant was reported to the King. Saul sent for David. When Saul saw David, he told him that he could not fight the giant, "for thou art but a youth and he a man of war from his youth." David then told Saul how he had slain a lion and a bear, and explained his confident trust in God, that as he had delivered him from these ferocious animals, so he would now save him from the Philistine. Saul then consented to risk the combat. The result is the subject of our lesson.

To Saul David was an unknown youth, for as David went forth to the combat Saul inquired of Abner, the captain, who the youth was, and Abner could not tell him. When David returned from his victory, Abner brought him to the King. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

Yet according to 16.14-32, David had been Saul's musician and armorbearer. After the account of David's anointing by Samuel to be Saul's successor, we are told that at times Saul was subject to extreme depression, perhaps to insanity. His officers suggested that music would bring relief, and recommended David to him as "skilful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a comely person", David was sent for, and his playing on his harp had the desired effect on Saul. Saul loved him and made him his armorbearer.

Evidently we have here two accounts of the way in which David came to be a member of Saul's court. Josephus would reconcile the two by understanding that several years passed between David's life at court as Saul's musician and his appearance in camp ready to fight Goliath, and therefore the King failed to recognize him. Verse 15, which says that "David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep in Bethlehem", seeks to reconcile the two, yet David is represented as an older man when he came to Saul as a musician than when he fought the Philistine. In the Septuagint, the oldest Greek Version of the Bible, thirty verses are lacking from the 17th chapter. Were they omitted because they do not harmonize with the earlier accounts? See p. 30 of our Introduction.

The Two Goliaths. In 2 Sam. 21.19 we read that "Elhanan slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." Was there another giant by the same name? David's Philistine champion is nameless save in verses 4 and 23. Has the name of Elhanan's adversary been transferred to David's, and is the 1 Ch. 20.5 a later chronicler's harmonization of the two statements in Samuel?

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After the Victory over Goliath. When the Philistines saw their champion fall they fled in terror toward Gath and Ekron, with the Israelites shouting jubilantly in hot pursuit. The Israelites slew them, and then returned to plunder the Philistine camp.

Meanwhile David brought the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, and put away the giant's sword as a trophy in the Sanctuary of Nob. In those days it was customary to hang up in the sacred buildings the swords or shields taken from an enemy, just as it has been customary in Europe today to erect a monument out of the cannon taken from an enemy in some great battle. Some time afterwards David was forced to flee from Saul, who was seeking his life. He had no weapon, and he went to Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, and asked for one. The aged priest replied that the only weapon he could give him was Goliath's sword. "There is none like that, give it to me," joyfully exclaimed David, and this sword, which he had so bravely won, encouraged as well as aided him in defending himself from his enemies.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

About twelve miles west of Bethlehem two wadies, or river-beds, meet, the first starting in the neighborhood of Bethlehem, the other in the neighborhood of Hebron. The united torrents that rush along these wadies in winter have made a deep ravine through the winding valey of Elah, which breaks through the mountains of Judah and then crosses the Low Hills to the Plain.

The Philistines, you remember, dwelt upon the Maritime Plain and the Israelites in the Hill-country. The Philistines drove their war-chariots up the Vale of Elah, till they reached the Plain of Shocoh, which is hemmed in on all sides by hills. Hidden among the bushes upon a hill overlooking this three-cornered plain were the Israelites. Leaving their war-chariots on the plain, the Philistines encamped on the hill opposite the Israelites. The Philistines could not attack the Israelites without descending their hill, crossing the plain and the brook, and ascending the hill of the Israelites. Meantime the Israelites could hurl down upon them darts and arrows. The Philistines were evidently determined to draw the Israelites down to the plain for battle. They did not expect that any Israelite would be rash enough to risk an encounter with their giant; rather must they have expected the Israelites to become so exasperated by his taunts that they would rush down upon the plain in a body, then the Philistines could quickly outfight them.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

In this story, we see Saul putting the armor of a man, an unusually large man, too, upon a stripling. Are you, perhaps, making a similar mistake in trying to arm your pupils for the moral battles of life? Do you expect from a child, or an adult that is still spiritually a child, the same type of religion that is yours in your maturity and spiritual growth? Youth has its own religious experience—manhood has another—old age yet another.

A Sunday-school teacher read to me recently a letter from a twelve-year-old pupil. It was full of that teacher's own expressions, emotional phrases of love for Christ, vague generalizations about delighting to work in the Master's Vineyard, desiring to extend the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and so on. "Is it not a wonderful letter for a child to write?" proudly asked the teacher. It certainly was an unnatural letter. The child was clad in the teacher's armor.

How about the religious convictions which you are teaching—are they your own, or another's? Are you speaking of what you do know and testifying to what you have experienced, or are you but echoing the thoughts and beliefs of others? If you have proved the religious convictions of others, then they befit you. If you have not, can you work effectively with them?

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Recall last week's story by questions, bringing out something of the way the shepherds in the East care for their flocks. Picture David as a shepherd

boy. Tell about his fight with the lion and the bear. David did not have a gun, for no one did in those days; instead he used a sling and stones. His sling was like this. Sketch it upon the blackboard and describe how David used it to frighten away the wild animals that would have eaten his sheep or carried away his lambs. "Up went the sling, out went the stone, down went the bear."

One day messengers came to all the cities and villages, bringing news that the Philistines were coming and the men must go out to fight, or they would lose their homes and their flocks and herds. They came to the place where Jesse lived with his eight sons. What was the name of the city? The three oldest boys went off to fight the Philistines. Where was David? A while afterwards Jesse sent David with some food to his brothers. Tell what Jesse said to David and how willingly David answered. Show Tissot's picture No. 80, David taking the presents from Jesse. Describe what David saw and tell what he heard on reaching the camp. Give the words that passed between him and Eliab, and tell how David was finally brought to the King. Give their conversation. In describing the arming of David, show Tissot's picture No 81. "The giant was ten feet high, and all his clothes were made of brass. He had a helmet of brass upon his head, and a breastplate of brass upon his breast, and a target of brass upon his back, and boots of brass upon his feet. But the King was the tallest man in the army, and the shepherd boy was short of stature. Saul's helmet came down over David's ears, and the coat of mail touched David's heels. He put them off. "I can fight best", he said "in my own way." As you tell about the combat, show Tissot's picture No. 82, David slinging the stone. Let your aim today be to make your pupils enjoy this story, and learn to love David for his courage and his trust in God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. Who is the tallest man you know? How tall is he? About nine years ago a Russian giant was exhibited in some of our larger cities. His name is Theodore Andrieff Machnoureez; he is nine feet three inches tall, and he weighs four hundred and fifty pounds. Would he have to stoop to enter your door? He was followed on the streets everywhere by great crowds, and one of the largest hotels in New York objected to keeping him as a guest because of the crowds that rushed into the hotel whenever he appeared.

What is the name of the Philistine giant with whom David engaged in single combat? How tall was he? Six cubits and a span, but how many feet is that? The cubit was originally the measure of the forearm, but the length of the forearm varied in different men, of course, and we are not certain just what was the average length, nor, indeed, whether the measurement was from the elbow to the wrist only, or from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The Egyptian cubit measured seventeen and two-third inches, about a foot and a half, and probably this was the measure of the Hebrew cubit. Goliath, then, was nine feet and nine inches in height, only six inches taller than this Russian giant. By some estimates he was not so tall as Machnoureez.

Goliath must have been very strong as well as tall, for his coat of mail weighed about a hundred and fifty pounds. What else did he wear in the way of armor? He has been called "a stalking mountain overlaid with brass and iron." How did Saul try to clothe and arm David? Why did David reject this armor?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Individuality

I Cannot go in These. I see Saul lending him his armor, and it was a very honoring bestowal. I see David, restless and uneasy, handling the great sword as if he feared it. And then I see him laying all aside, and crying out, "I cannot go in these," and fingering his well-loved sling again. For Saul there was but one way of fighting. He had never dreamed of any other way. There was only one tradition in his chivalry, and every fighter must conform to that. But David, fresh from the uplands, and the morning, and the

whispering of God among the hills, must have liberty to fight in his own way. The one was all for immemorial custom. The other was determined to be free. The one said, "I cannot go in these". And remember that it was not Saul who was in the line of God's election, but that young stripling from the Bethlehem pasturage who in his service dared to be himself. *G. H. Morrison,* in *The Afterglow of God.*

The Passion for Uniformity. There is so often an attempt made to secure a certain uniformity of religious experience. We expect all people to pass through the same process of religious development, and if they do not pass through what we consider to be the normal and recognized experience, we are more than half inclined to think they are not Christians at all.

But surely there is more than one way of "coming to Christ" and winning the kingdom, and it is foolish and absurd of us to try and insist upon one stereotyped method. Here are two hyacinths in full and perfect bloom. But they came by their perfection and beauty in different ways. One grew in earth, the other in water. Here are two Christian men, both obviously living consecrated lives; one came to Christ, like Paul, through the startling and overwhelming experience; the other came, like Timothy, through the gracious ministries of the home.

And just as there are different methods of entering the kingdom, so there are *different types of religious life,* and we make a fatal blunder when we expect the spiritual life in every one to express itself in the same way.

It is equally foolish to try to impose the *forms of truth* accepted in one age upon another. We should never dream of doing this in the realm of secular knowledge. But if we refuse to attempt to make the twentieth century speak the scientific language of the nineteenth century, why should we try to compel it to speak the theological language of centuries long gone by? For religious knowledge enlarges and grows just as certainly as scientific knowledge does. Our Lord himself said that the Spirit would take of his things and would reveal them unto his people. "The Lord," said our own John Robinson in a golden sentence, "hath still more light and truth to break forth from his Word." And the new light and larger knowledge will inevitably express themselves in new speech. It is nothing less than absurd and foolish to expect the twentieth century to speak the religious language and think the religious thought of the fourth century or the seventeenth. Has the Spirit of Christ not been with us though the centuries that have since elapsed? And has he not been leading us into fuller and larger truth? *Condensed* from *The Hope of the Gospel,* by *Dr. J. D. Jones.*

Work in Your Own Way. We recognize in secular affairs that in choosing a calling or business for a boy, consideration should be had to the bent of his own mind. The same principle holds good in higher things. It is not what the world—even the religious world—counts the correct way that matters; what matters is that every man should work in the way best suited for him. It matters little whether it is counted correct or orthodox. It is his way—let him work in it. Think what would have happened if certain men we know of had allowed themselves to be coerced into orthodox ways of work. If Francis had been coerced into recognized ways of service, there would have been no revival in Italy. If Luther had been coerced into living and working in orthodox monastic fashion, there would have been no reformation in Europe. If John Wesley had been coerced back into the respectabilities of Anglicanism, there would have been no evangelical revival or Methodist Church. If William Booth had allowed himself to be bound down by the red tape of Connectionalism, there would have been no Salvation Army. They did their work because they dared to be themselves: Let every man follow their example. Be yourselves. Don't copy. Don't imitate. Work according to the law of your own being. *Dr. J. D. Jones,* in *The Hope of the Gospel.*

II Facing Giants

How a Minister Met a Giant. In early manhood **Mr. J. V. Hernshaw** preached among the roughest colliery districts of England and Wales. In his reminiscences, he tells about his encounter with "Big Jock". This giant collier

had been angered by the attempt of previous "parsons" to reform him, and he sent word to Mr. Hernshaw that he would thrash him if he came to see him. Mr. Hernshaw, nothing daunted, went to the miner's cabin one morning and gave a loud knock.

The door flew open, and Big Jock's enormous figure filled the doorway. Beyond him, the clergyman caught sight of a table roughly set for a meal, and a number of round-eyed children with their spoons poised half-way.

"I've had a long walk. May I come in and sit down to breakfast with you?" he inquired.

"Tha mayn't," said Big Jock, truculently. "Tha bain't coomin' in; I be coomin' out. And I've heerd what tha's said o' me, and tha knows what to expect, man. I be a-going to lick thee; I be a-going to lick thee *now*."

"Very well," agreed the parson, "but I should put up a much better fight if I had breakfast first; and if there is going to be a fight, it seems a pity it shouldn't be as good a one as possible."

"I bain't going to *fight* thee; I be going to *lick* thee," corrected Jack, grimly. "Tha can't fight."

"Perhaps not, though if you assault me I shall try," agreed the parson. "But at any rate, I can take a licking. Only I'm quite sure I could take it better after breakfast. I am feeling extremely hollow."

Jock glowered for a long moment, then made way for his visitor with a hospitable roar of invitation: "Come in and fill thee oop, then, tha comical little bunch o' pluck! Time enough to lick thee arter, if us finds licking needful."

The hospitality so formidably qualified was promptly accepted, and by the time the meal was ended, neither "us" nor either one gave any further thought to the averted "licking". They had become firm friends.

The Victorious Lion who Lost the Victory. In the heart of the Satpura Hills, there lived a young Baiga named Jai Singh (Victorious Lion). The Baigas are a wild, wandering, aboriginal race of people.

One day Jai Singh went fishing, and lying down at the edge of the river dozed off to sleep. Quietly, out of the jungle came a hungry tiger; nearer and nearer he approached the sleeping Baiga, and then he sprang forward to seize his prey. But a sleeping Baiga is still a shikari (hunter) and just as the tiger's strong paw fell across the unconscious man's head, he awoke, and swinging his sure right arm (the hand of which even whilst sleeping had been grasping his axe) around, he struck the tiger a mighty blow across the head. Mr. Stripes, with a disappointed roar, rushed off into the jungle. Jai Singh was well-nigh scalped, and all his life bore the deep scars as memories of his high adventure.

And now I come to the sad part of my story. Jai Singh took to drink. It was not a difficult thing to do, for all Baigas drink, and Jai Singh had learned to drink before he became a Christian. The missionary tried to help him, the Christians pointed out the folly of it, his wife pleaded and his children wept, but poor Jai Singh sank deeper and deeper into the mire.

The wife worked hard to provide rice for them all, but there came a time when she could work no longer, and the little ones cried for food. And then one day, when the rain was flooding the fields and rivers, Jai Singh set out for a village a few miles distant to beg some rice from a farmer. He was very hungry and very weak, and when some travellers asked him to have a drink he did not refuse. The wife watched in vain for her husband to return, and the children cried themselves to sleep, and woke to more hungry days; then, on the fourth day, Jai Singh's body was found in a flooded lake near the village where he had gone for the rice.

Poor Jai Singh, what a sad end to a brave man's life! Many times he had fought with wild beasts in the jungle, and conquered. Many times he had swum across flooded rivers, for he was as much at home in the water as a fish; and then, at the end, drink had conquered him, for when he slipped and fell over the enbankment, he was evidently too intoxicated to make any attempt to save himself, and so he was drowned only a few yards from land.
M. E. Williams in *The Christian*.

III If God Is for Us, Who Is against Us?

Celebrating the Victory. It was a memorable day when we read the story of the personal combat between David and Goliath. No record of pugilistic encounter in the "ring" was ever received with more enthusiasm by lovers of the so-called manly art than was this narrative by my Benny. He laughed aloud; he shouted words of encouragement to the shepherd lad and hurled jeers and scoffs at the bragging giant. In vain I tried to subdue this uproarious appreciation of sacred history. He waived me aside, respectfully, but with firmness, crying eagerly, "Oh, I just can't help it; please let me go on, ma'am. I must see which whips; 'most know that boy does." When Goliath utters his scornful boast, "Come to me and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air," Benny sniffed contemptuously and muttered, "We'll see about that, sir. Mebbe them fowls will have somebody else to eat before long." But when he read David's response, with its modest confidence in God's ability to make him conqueror, a serious smile lighted up the dark face. "That's the talk," he said. "David couldn't do it all hisself and he knows it. But God can do just anything and he'll help him beat, you see if he don't." We all know that he did give the lad a glorious victory, though few of us remember when the knowledge first came to us. But I shall never forget Benny's extravagant delight over the result, or the peculiar way in which he celebrated the victory. That evening at dinner as he waited at table there was a suppressed excitement apparent in his manner, a sort of restful impatience at any delay or lingering over the meal, not usual in the youth. This was explained when, with the dessert, our waiter proudly brought in a loaf of frosted cake, garnished with flowers and having a small American flag in the center. At our exclamation of surprise Benny chuckled and said, "That's on 'count of the great vict'ry,—David's, you know. We wasn't any of us there to celebrate at the time and I reckoned we'd ought to take some notice of it now." *Annie Trumbull Slosson,* in *A Simple Expositor, Sunday-School Times.*

David's Great Distinction. I would fain begin David's shining graces by saying that faith in God is the true and real and living root of them all. I would fain begin with David's faith, were it not that there is no word in all our tongue that carries less meaning and less vision to most people's minds and hearts than just this so frequent sound—faith. As Pascal says, we all believe in that dead word God; but there is only one here and another there who really and truly believes in the living, ever-present and all present God. But this is David's shining distinction above all God's saints—unless there are two or three in the New Testament who equal and excel David. In his pure, courageous, noble youth; all through his hunted-down days; fallen and broken and full of the pains of hell; filling up his dreary gift of years,—David is always the same unconquered miracle of faith in God. Take and read and hear what David says to the Philistine giant about God, and you will see somewhat of his youthful faith in God. Then pass on to far on in his life, and open the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm; and I am safe to say that David, the author of that psalm, and Jesus of Nazareth, whom I may call the finisher of it, have been the only two saints and sons of God on the face of this earth who have ever taken up, understood and imaginatively and unceasingly employed in their prayers that great believing psalm. *Dr. Alexander Whyte* in *Bible Characters.*

Foreign Missions know of No Impossibilities. The pioneers going out alone were more ludicrous than David with his little sling against Goliath. For they wrestle not with flesh and blood. But they had the faith which the Lord invited, the faith that can remove mountains and to which nothing is impossible. If ever the world was warranted in ridiculing a movement for the disparity of its means and aims, for its worldly impotence, for its illusions of faith, for its innocence, for its childlike magnitude of ambition, it was warranted when Carey and queer John Thomas set forth for India. But these are the very lessons which we need to learn today, that there is no impossible duty, that nothing that is right and good should be left uncared for, that all that Christ saw in humanity is there, even its recoverableness from all its waste and sin.

This is what foreign missions mean to us. They teach the miracle of endless possibility in the world. They have been the miracle of an ever new possibility in the church. *Robert E. Speer,* in *The Constructive Quarterly.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Each one of us has his own giants which he should face. John Bunyan has mentioned some of them; Giant Pride, Giant Grim, Giant Pagan. What are your giants? Are they perhaps Giant Anger, Giant Untruthfulness, Giant Selfishness, Giant Sullenness? You know that it is said of Jesus as a lad that he "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Now the Greek word which is translated "increased" means literally "cut his way forward." If you would be worthy of God's favor and man's, you must bravely cut your way forward against all the evil giants that beset your pathway. You must engage in single combat with each giant alone, and yet on your side fights the Great Helper who was with David. As you wrestle with each one, say with Whittier:

"So let it be. In God's own might
I gird me for the coming fight,"

then you will be armed, not alone with pebbles of determination and courage, but with the sling of sublime confidence in God.

Our Prayer. Almighty God, thou canst give me victories through thy grace. Let my battlefield today resound with triumph. Let the song of jubilation never be silent. Let me return to thee in the evening, bringing my spoils with me. *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Individuality. See the First Topic.
2. Modern champions. See "John R. Mott, Generalissimo", *Outlook,* Nov. 25, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What good things about David were said to Saul in 1 S. 16.18? 2. What is said in 1 S. 18.1-4 about the beginning of the friendship between David and Jonathan? 3. Why was Saul jealous of David, and what had he tried to do to David before this? 4. What other escapes through a window does the Bible record? (See Concordance.) 5. How did Michal delay the discovery of David's flight and allow him time to get safely away? 6. What is the heading of Psalm 59? Read the Psalm. 7. When did Moses have an opportunity to be jealous which he refused to use? (Num. 11.26-30.) 8. How did his disciples try to arouse the jealousy of John the Baptist and what was the result?

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Jonathan make the plan he did with David? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 200.) 2. When did David "put his life in his hands"? 3. What reasons can you give for supposing that Saul was insane at times? 4. What does "he put his life in his hand" mean, and to what occasion does it refer? 5. What does "an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul", ninth verse mean? (*Guide,* p. 201.) 6. What traits of character does Saul show in this lesson? 7. Does our Golden Text mean that one who trusted Jehovah will be safe from all harm? (*Guide,* ¶ 11, p. 206.) 8. Why did Joseph's brothers sell him? 9. Who is the first man in the Bible whose jealousy is recorded, and to what did it lead? 10. Portray the jealousy of the elder brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. 11. Do you like to hear another praised? Is your home or place of business more pleasant for others because of your presence there? 12. What is the cure for jealousy?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Harold Farrington's stanza, p. 205, or the prayer on p. 207.

In your Life of David, write Part III, David the Champion.

LESSON V—MAY 2

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

Golden Text

Whosoever putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe. Proverbs 29.25

LESSON 1 Samuel 19: verses 1-12 printed
MEMORIZE verses 4, 5

1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. 2 And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul, my father, seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: 3 and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee. 4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good; 5 for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? 6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. 7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.

8 And there was war again, and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled before him. 9 And an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand. 10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. 11 And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain. 12 So Michal let David down through the window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Saul spake.* Several commentators refer to Henry the Second's outburst of passion against Thomas à Becket as similar to this outburst of Saul's.—*To his son and to all his servants, that they should slay David.* That Saul so openly gave utterance to his murderous intent is surely an indication of insanity, for he well knew Jonathan's affection for David, and one servant, not all, he would have commissioned to do the foul deed, (as later David himself did in the case of Uriah), had he been possessed of his full reason.

2. *In the field.* In the open country.—*Commune with my father of thee.* Jonathan may have wished David near so as to overhear the king's words and fully appreciate the danger, or his thought may have been that David must be near so that no time would be lost in warning David in case he could not influence his father.

4-5. *Let not the king sin.* By shedding innocent blood.—*He hath not sinned against thee.* You have no ground for your jealousy.—*Put his life in his hand.* Risked his life. On the skill of his hand depended his life when he went out against Goliath.—*Jehovah wrought a great victory.* By ascribing the victory to Jehovah rather than to David Jonathan allays Saul's jealousy.—*Thou sawest it and didst rejoice.* He calls to his father's mind a happier time.

6-7. *Saul sware.* By a solemn oath.—*He shall not be put to death.* Jonathan had driven away for the time being the mad frenzy of the king and he is himself once more.—*He was in his presence as before-time.* He was no longer obliged to hide.

DAVID AND SAUL

From a Drawing by Simeon Solomon

9. *An evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul.* Or, *the spirit of Jehovah was evil toward Saul,* RVm. "This may be understood as the result of the physician's diagnosis, in the sense of the conception which looked upon sickness as caused by demons" (*Jeremias*). Anger is a kind of inflammation of the brain—a "brain-storm". According to Lange it is a case of the ancient saying that "whom the gods would destroy they first made mad", for he suggests that Jehovah is here affirmed to be the sender of the evil spirit, because Saul's condition is here regarded as a judgment of the Covenant God of Israel on the reprobate king, who hardens his heart against God. Rather is it the oriental way to think of God as the source of all things and in control of all things, and therefore to speak of evil as well as good coming from him, where we speak of God as permitting evil. In 2 S. 24.16, the "pestilence" is called an angel of Jehovah. Dr. J. Warschauer was lecturing recently in England when some one in the audience called out that "If God is responsible for the good, he must also be responsible for the evil." "He is responsible for the potentiality; not for the actuality", Dr. Warschauer replied, and then illustrated his thought in this way: "If you are the cause of your child learning to read, walk, and cycle, that fact does not render you responsible for his choosing pernicious books to read on his own initiative, nor for every fall which he has." —*As he sat in his house with his spear in his hand.* The tall spear was always by his side and served as a scepter, as a mark of royalty.—*David was playing with his hand.* Music was considered a means for driving away the demon of melancholy.

11. *To watch him.* To make sure that he did not leave the house during the night. Psalm 59 is entitled "Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies. A Psalm of David. When Saul sat, and they watched the house to kill him."

12. *Michal let David down through the window.* The messengers sent by Saul were watching the door. For similar escapes see Josh. 2.15; Acts 9.25. To deceive Saul's messengers, Michal put an image (teraphim) in his bed and not till Saul ordered David brought to him on his bed was the deception discovered.—*He went and fled, and escaped.* To Samuel at Ramah. In 1 S. 21.2 we learn that David reached Nob without weapons or attendants. Now begins for David that fugitive life in which he was beset with many dangers and endured much suffering.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

10. *Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with his spear.* According to an ancient Asiatic custom, when a dart was thrown at a freedman, and he escaped from it by flight, he was thereby absolved from all allegiance to his master. Thus Saul by his murderous fury gave complete liberty to David, whose subsequent acts of war against the king could not be considered rebellion. From that hour he was no longer a subject of King Saul. *Freeman, Handbook of Bible Customs.*

12. *Through the window.* In Jerusalem today there are often balconies projecting over the street from the upper stories, enclosed by latticed windows. Many of the houses in Palestine have wooden shutters at the windows which may be closed to keep out the heat.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What strong points in Saul's character have our lessons disclosed? What weak points? What did he know about his losing his kingdom? What wild vow did he make which doomed his son to death? What did he purpose doing which the people prevented? How has Jonathan proved his loyalty to his country? How did he show great faith? Great courage? Great strength? How did David risk his life for his country?

The First Meeting of David and Jonathan. Jonathan was present when Abner brought David, the victorious champion of Israel against Goliath, into the King's presence. At once a beautiful friendship sprang up between the two young men. "Jonathan loved David as his own soul," the record says, and in token of his love gave David his own robe, sword and bow. Thus David's victory over Goliath not only brought about the defeat of the Phil-

istines, but gained for David the friendship of Jonathan and a position at court. His wise course brought him the approval of all the people.

The Reason for Saul's Jealousy. If we connect this lesson directly with the first lesson in this quarter, it seems natural enough that Saul should look on David with jealous hatred. See p. 180. Saul had been told by the prophet that his kingdom should be taken from him and given to another better than he, and he looked with suspicious eyes at any one likely to prove this promised successor.

The song of the women after David's victory over the Philistines, which ascribed to Saul his thousands and to David his ten thousands, first aroused the demon of jealousy in Saul's heart. "What can he have more than the kingdom?" he said, and he *eyed* David from that day and forward. Every later indication that God was with David increased his jealousy. Convinced that David was the man who would succeed him, he did not hesitate to attempt to render the prophecy vain by striving to accomplish the death of David. From that time onward his chief ambition seems to have been to accomplish this object. His attempt is the subject of nine chapters of First Samuel.

To remove David from his sight, he made him captain over a thousand men, and when Samuel saw that David behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David.

After betrothing his older daughter, Merab, to David, Saul gave her in marriage to another. If Saul hoped that David would seek revenge and commit some treasonable act, he was disappointed. Michal, Saul's younger daughter, loved David, and the king agreed that she should become David's wife on condition that, in lieu of the customary dowry due to the father of the bride, David should kill a hundred Philistines. Saul hoped that David would perish in the attempt, but David carried out the order. Michal became David's wife, and thus he was raised to a position of prince of the royal family second in rank to that of Jonathan. As David's popularity increased, Saul's jealous hatred knew no bounds. He openly sought David's life.

Two Records. Verses 1-7 seem to be an account of the same incident as that which is elaborated in chapter 20, and verses 8-10 a duplicate of 18.10-12. Yet Saul may have made two similar attempts upon David's life, and between the two Jonathan suceeded in effecting a reconciliation, verses 1-7.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The incident took place in and near Gibeah, where Saul resided. See p. 154.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

There is danger that in teaching these lessons, whose chief characters exhibit so many sins and weaknesses which are the sins and weaknesses of life today, that our emphasis shall be negative rather than positive: as, Do not be jealous: Do not let your anger get the upper hand: Do not lack self-control. These lessons are far less valuable than other sets of lessons: Rejoice in the success or good fortune of others. Be self-controlled. You will show by Saul's deed the blackness of jealousy and the crime to which it may lead, but do not fail also to show by Jonathan's spirit how he refused to look upon David as a rival, or to distrust him, and how he rejoiced in David's victory, and wished him to have all his due meed of praise. To put before pupils high ideals, to awake an impulse to achieve these ideals strong enough to lead to action, is a teacher's true task.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Briefly recall the story of David and Goliath and tell how after that victory David went to King Saul's palace and often played on his harp before the King. Show Tissot's picture No. 83. Talk about David's happy disposition which made every one like him, and how Jonathan, the King's son, loved him. Explain why Saul was jealous of David. Sketch on your board the scene in the open field which is the first part of our lesson, a large rock on one side behind which David is out of sight, two men (or even two straight marks to represent

them) close together on the other. Give the dialogue of Saul and Jonathan in simple words.

As you describe the second scene of the lesson, show Tissot's picture No. 84. Enforce the lesson of being glad over another's good fortune by telling the story of the Buds, p. 204. I have heard about a boy named Joe whom everybody loves and one of the reasons is because he is always glad when others do something fine. When he won a race he said to the other boy: "I'm sorry we couldn't both win. You certainly made me work hard!" And when another boy won he clapped his hands gleefully. When Ruth stood at the head in spelling he said he was glad, and he really was glad.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When Frederick William IV of Germany was raging one day over a servant's neglect, Queen Elizabeth stood still and looked around the room where they were until he asked what she was looking for. "I'm looking for the King", she answered quietly. The King was silenced, for he realized that he had been acting in an unkingly manner. Today we shall look in vain for the king, for we see Saul allowing himself to be overmastered by angry passion.

For Older Pupils. Simeon Solomon in his picture *David and Saul* (see the picture facing this Lesson) has attempted to make portraits of the two men without any suggestion from a model. He is justified because of the accepted general law that the face is an index of the soul. His picture is, therefore, the truest of all portraits. He paints the mind as well as the body. He makes the eye no mere organ of the vision, but the window of the soul. He reveals the man behind the face.

The picture represents the episode in which David is sent for as the one man who can charm away Saul's demon of madness. Henceforth the two men are bound up in the bundle of life together. The Bible and the picture alike represent them, side by side; Saul moody, melancholy, his great spear always by his side; David fresh from the fields, with his harp and shepherd's crook, the one bright spirit in a gloomy court. The artist has given the men tell-tale faces; on Saul's is the blackness of despair; on David's the light of love. The picture's comment on David and Saul is that all external beauty of facial expression is born of internal spiritual beauty. *Henry E. Jackson,* in *Biblical World.*

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Jealousy

The Redeemer of Saul. The poet Browning in his beautiful poem entitled "Saul", offers excuses for the poor king and sets himself the task of showing how he might be redeemed. David is the instrument of redemption. It is the words of David to which we listen. He tells how at the bidding of Abner he came with his harp to play before the distraught king; and how he sang songs of the sheep-folding, of the reaper, of the carrying a man to his last resting place, and then the song of the bridal and the song of the Levites as they went to worship in the temple, and of the joy of living. Next he sang of the glory of the king, of all he had achieved, of the honor among men in which he was held, and of the glory of Saul's soul, and pictured him ending his life triumphantly, with the affection of all his subjects As he sings thus Saul's mood vanishes, and he is himself again, and sitting down upon the tent floor he lays his hand lovingly upon the head of the singer. A great yearning fills David's soul.

> I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
> As this moment—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!

he cries. And he pictures to himself the love of God redeeming Saul, freeing him from all his blunders and mistakes, until with prophetic vision he leads Saul, not to redemption only, but to his Redeemer, and he cries exultantly:—

O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee: a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever! A hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

The Dread of Envy. When the word of the Lord came to Moses: "Get thee up into the mountain; for there thou shalt die; henceforth Joshua shall lead my people", Moses prayed: "O, let me live and be servant to Joshua, and go over Jordan with him?" And the Lord answered, "Be it unto thee according to thy prayer."

Then the two men went to the Tabernacle, and the cloud descended and separated one from the other. When it rose again, Moses said: "Joshua, my master, what word was revealed unto thee?" And Joshua said: "Didst thou not hear it? How strange; for whenever I was at thy side, I always did hear the voice of God and understood his bidding."

Moses bent his head; shame covered his face; and the spirit of envy whispered to him thoughts of evil! But for a moment only. For he fell on his face and cried: *"O Lord, a hundred deaths rather than one sting of envy."*

And Moses went up and entered a cave, and laid himself down on the rocky floor, and the Almighty came, and, with a kiss, freed the pure soul of the prophet from its earthly bonds, and lifted it unto his presence where there is fulness of joy for evermore. *The Midrash.*

Which Bud do you Prefer? The first rose of summer was open on the tree which overspread the house wall, and delighted everybody, old and young. People came out of the house to look at it and to enjoy its delicious odor. Passersby stopped to look and say, "What a lovely rose!" But it was admired most of all by the buds which had not yet opened. They were like courtiers round a beloved and honored and beautiful queen; they whispered to one another, "How beautiful she is! What fragrance she breathes! What purity of color! What elegance of shape! Did you ever see a flower so charming and noble? It is a joy to live upon the same tree with her." Suddenly one exclaimed to another, "Sister, I believe you are growing like the Rose. You are not so small as you were, and you are changing color at the tip; there is a whiteness, a creaminess coming over you. I *do* think you are growing like our queen." "I am afraid not," the other answered; "I feel as though I had not room in myself to hold my admiration for her, but I fear I shall never be like her. It is kind of you, however, to cheer me with the hope, dear sister." A third Bud joined in the conversation, "Pooh, pooh!" she said, "why should you want to be like the queen, as you call her? I see nothing in her to admire so much. She hangs heavily down; I prefer to stand up in a firm manner. I like better to be a compact and solid bud, than a loosely-formed thing. I don't like the paleness which you call creaminess. I am sure green is a much more fashionable color. Look round and see if it is not."

Just then the gardener came up and looked over the tree, and said, "I am afraid this bud is cankered." It was the one which had spoken last. The other Buds went on whispering and growing warm and swelling with admiration for the rose, and in due time they came one by one to blossom, and were nearly, if not quite, as rich in color and perfume as the flower which they had admired so much. But the peevish one only half opened, and as it looked very ugly the gardener snipped it off and threw it to the ground, where the slugs ate it up and enjoyed it greatly, for they don't get rosebuds every day, so it was good for something after all. *Condensed* from *A Mountain Rath,* by *John A. Hamilton.*

How to Overcome Jealousy. Envy and hate and malice of all sorts are not to be disposed of by argument and repression. They can only be swept out of the heart by love. The only way to do with excellence of any kind is to love it, be glad and proud of it, appreciate it as if it were part of your own possession, and it is if you do this. Hate makes a circle of contagion and infects everything; and love, too, makes a blessed circle till we see nothing but love, think nothing but love, feel nothing but love. At the center of that circle, whose circumference is the whole universe, there stands a cross. We can not keep our malice there. *Hugh Black,* in *Listening to God.*

II Self-Control

The Cause of Saul's Downfall. I have heard that a man who is at the head of a London business firm was beside himself with anger because he missed a train and an important business engagement. The office clock had been too slow and had been the cause of his failing to reach the station on time. Losing all control of himself, the man rushed back to the office, seized the big clock, and dashed it down the stone stairway. Probably he had done just such things as a boy. Had it been a man instead of a clock who had belated him, might not such utter loss of self-control have led that man of affairs in his blind fury to hurl the offender to his death?

Saul was the respected head of the Israelite nation. He had many good qualities, but self-control was not one of them. His life is a tragedy, the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service to his kingdom but not having himself in control. The tragic ruin of a promising life is most pathetic. In the chapter which follows this lesson we read that "his anger was kindled", and so fierce was the flame that he reviled Jonathan's mother, his own wife, tried to kill Jonathan, his own son, because Jonathan was taking David's part.

Be Kings. Peter the Great once made a law that if anybody struck a servant he should be treated as if he were a madman. Not long after this he was walking in his garden when he became very angry at something his gardener said or did and he struck the man a hard blow. Then Peter the Great in shame exclaimed, "I can conquer cities, but I cannot conquer myself."

Harold Farrington's poem shows how one may be a King at heart.

I don't mean kings like the tyrants of old,
Men who would barter their freedom for gold,
Men who were cruel, despotic, untrue,
Not like such kings would I have one of you!
Kings of your tempers I'd have you to be,
Kings of yourselves, boys, courageous and free!
Kings of your actions and kings of your tongue,
Kings of your characters while you are young!
Kings of your thinking; not slaves to such things.
Rise above serfdom, and, boys, become kings!

One who Gained the Mastery over Self. Henry Martyn is one whom the Church of England delights to honor, because he was so close a follower of Jesus Christ. In his youth he gave way to ungovernable fits of temper. As a student in the University he was noted for his hot temper and sharp tongue. It is recorded that on one occasion a fit of passion siezed him at table, and he flung a knife at a companion who aroused his ire. He himself has said that at home his consummate selfishness and irritability were displayed in rage, malice, and envy, in pride and vainglory and contempt of others, in the harshest language to his sister and even to his father, if he happened to differ from them. Yet Henry Martyn with God's help tamed his tongue and conquered his temper.

Under Perfect Control. I have been at base-ball games when the whole effort on the part of the home base-ball team and its mass of supporters, had been skilfully directed against the opposing pitcher in an effort to get him so angry that he would lose control of the ball and thus enable the shouters to bat a victory. To this end jeers against the personal character and integrity of the man would be employed, taunts, profanity and even the hurling of soda bottles. "Get him goin'!" is the shout of the ruffian manager of sports against an opponent. "Get him mad and you've got him!" But how splendid it has been to see the man under such perfect discipline that none of those things have moved him, and his victory has been thrice the victory because secured in spite of such unjust odds. *Wellspring.*

III Trust and Safety

The Strength was Given. In a story about life in Australia, May Howard tells what happened to two children who had been left alone for the day on a farm many miles from the nearest town. It was very hot, and a stifling wind

was blowing up from the back of the house with a strange, bitter smell. The little girl went around to the back and stood sniffing the breeze. "It smells like fire," she said, and in a flash there came back to her all her father's stories of bush fires. Now over the scrub on the horizon she could see a little cloud of smoke. Yes, a fire it was, and the dry grass and withered trees would burn like anything, she knew. What should they do? Fly! But how? Una never stopped to think if she was frightened, the thoughts came so fast she had no time.

Her uncle had left the black mare, Flo, in the stable. She would saddle her and ride to Wilton, where the others were. She ran to the stable and dragged the saddle onto the mare—how she fastened it she never knew—with five-year-old Dick trotting at her heels all the time. As the minutes went by the mare grew more and more restive, and Una had all she could do. However, it was done at last.

"Now, Dickie, we are going for a ride," she said; "I'll put you up; hold tight!" He went up most unsteadily and clung like a monkey, then Una seized the stirrup and climbed up herself; she had mounted in the stable for fear the mare would not stand outside, and in that she was right. As soon as the animal was released she swung round and was out of the door in a flash, the little girl crouching low to avoid the lintel. Flo needed no telling, she was away, flying in terror from the fiery demon behind; for already they could hear the roar of flames.

As long as she lives Una will never forget that ride! The two children clung desperately to any part of the horse they could hold as she fled on, wild terror urging her through the forest with the other wild things. Above their heads numberless birds flew, by their side ran or leaped the four-legged inhabitants of the forest. Now Dickie slipped, with a scream of terror, and Una snatched him back again, saying with a half-sob, "It's all right, it's all right, God will take care of us."

Now they were clear of the forest and the danger of overhanging branches, Flo's heels clicked on the pebbles in the river-bed; they were over and stretching along the high-road for Wilton. Surely they were safe now! Una dared not look back, she had all she could do to keep her seat, but she felt the mare begin to slacken and finally stop, breathing heavily. At the same moment, glancing ahead, the little girl saw her uncle's buggy coming along at a furious pace.

"Una!" he cried when he saw her, and his face looked strange and white. "Thank heaven!" He put them both into the buggy, tied Flo to the back and turned towards Wilton again. In another half-hour the children were clasped in their mother's arms.

The fire raged for two days on the far side of the river, and when it had finally burnt itself out Uncle Stephen went back over the blackened country to see if there was anything left of his home.

When he joined them again it was with a very sober face. "There is nothing left," he said, "absolutely nothing. Thank God, Una, you had courage enough to get on the mare; if you had not—"

He broke off, and Mrs. Barlow held her little daughter close. "How did you do it, darling?"

And Una, with her mother's arm about her, answered in a low voice: "I don't know, Mummie, but"—shyly—"I think God does."

Whosoever putteth his Trust in Jehovah shall be Safe. In the proverb which has been chosen as our Golden Text what does the word *safe* mean? That one who trusts God will never be shot down by some frenzied Saul, will never meet with an accident, will never suffer calamity? Assuredly not. Does it mean that the one who trusts God will suffer less than the irreligious? Rather is it true that the best men suffer most and the worst men suffer least, for the best have the greater capacity for suffering. The Text means what Socrates meant when he said: Know this of a surety that no evil can happen to a good man either in this life or after death. Trouble and sorrow and suffering and burdens are the lot of the Christian, from these he is not kept, but by them he is disciplined, not overcome, in them he is safe, and in God's good plan for him they are not an evil, they work together for good.

"How do you keep so calm under heavy burdens?" William E. Gladstone was once asked. In answer Mr. Gladstone led the way into his bedroom and pointed to a framed Scripture text which faced him at every morning's awakening, and said, "That is the secret." These were the words: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

"Care is to think of the future as if there were no God," is the definition which a young girl gave, and it is a good one. A Christian knows that his life is not the sport of fate nor the plaything of evil men, but that a righteous and just God watches over him and directs all things for his best good.

Our Golden Text is but one-half of an antithetic proverb—

The fear of man bringeth a snare;
But whosoever putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe.

One may be deceived by man, may vainly put his trust in man, but he is never deceived by God, his trust in God is never misplaced. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. If we would be safe, if we would live in the condition of absolute security, we must live near God.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The bad temper is not to be sighed over but to be conquered; the jealous disposition is not to be lamented, but to be uprooted. Let us beware of weakly regretting what may be mastered. Cultivate love for others, and there will be no room in your heart for these two evils.

Our Prayer:—

From bitterness preserve me, Lord:
From jealous thoughts protect my day;
Against the stroke of envy's sword
Help me to hold my way.
And grant my soul sufficient grace
To gladden at another's prize,
And look upon his eager face
With sympathetic eyes. *Henry Robinson Palmer.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Saul—a psychological study.
2. The effect of jealousy and hatred upon health.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is said in 1 S. 18.1-4 about the beginning of the friendship between David and Jonathan? 2. What is said in 1 S. 19.1-7 about Jonathan's interceding for David? 3. Read the entire twentieth chapter of First Samuel. 4. How is Jonathan's love for David expressed in verse 17? 5. What words of Jonathan show how unwilling he was to believe his father would harm David? (20.9.) 6. What was said at the last meeting between David and Jonathan? (1 S. 23.15-18.) 7. What did David say in 2 S. 1.26 about Jonathan's love? 8. How does Psalm 55.21 characterize a false friend? 9. What friend is referred to in Prov. 18.24? 10. How does Christ say we can prove our friendship for him? (John 15.14.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Was it to Jonathan's interest to befriend David? 2. What must David have admired in Jonathan? 3. What must Jonathan have admired in David? 4. How did Saul try to turn Jonathan against David? With what effect? 5. Dr. George Matheson has a sermon upon "Jonathan the Generous": to what incidents in Jonathan's life do you think he refers? 6. What is the meaning of "Jehovah shall be between me and thee"? 7. What is a friend? 8. What have you a right to expect of a friend? 9. What has your friend a right to expect of you? 10. How can you win friends? 11. How can you keep friends? 12. Will circumstances alter true friendship? 13. Does it make any difference what kind of chums you have? 14. Who is your ideal friend?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of David, write part IV. David's Life Sought by Saul.

LESSON VI—MAY 9

FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

Golden Text

A friend loveth at all times. Proverbs 17.17

LESSON 1 Samuel 20: verses 32-42 printed
MEMORIZE verse 42

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefort should he be put to death? what hath he done? 33 And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to put David to death. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no food the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. 36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? 38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. 39 But the lad knew not anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. 41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. 42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jehovah shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, forever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

32. *Jonathan answered Saul.* He tries the effect of mild words upon his father, who is beside himself with passion.

33. *Saul cast his spear at him.* Jonathan's questions so arouse his father's anger that he would kill his son. The Hebrew word translated "cast" may mean, however, lifted, lifted threatenly.—*Whereby Jonathan knew.* Further evidence was scarcely needed! He had been unwilling to admit the fact to himself, hitherto, verse 9.

34. *He was grieved for David.*
His generous friendship no cold medium knows.
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows (*Pope*)—*Because his father had done him shame.* "Shame" had been done to Jonathan by his father's angry, insulting words, verse 30, but this he overlooks; "shame" had been done to David by his father's publicly accusing David of treasonable designs, verse 31, and over this and David's danger Jonathan grieves.

35-36. *At the time.* Or, *to the place, RVm.—Appointed.* With David, verses 18-23.—*A little lad.* Young enough not to suspect Jonathan's plan.—*Beyond him.* Hebrew, *making it pass over him,* RVm. Jonathan shot one or more arrows (verse 20) and sent the boy to get them, and while the boy was running to the place where they fell, he shot an arrow that flew over his head and fell beyond him (verse 22): more than one arrow was shot according to verse 38.

37. *Is not the arrow beyond thee?* When the lad came to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan uttered the words agreed upon,

verse 22: the words were spoken to the lad but were intended for David, who was in hiding, verse 24.

38. *Make speed, haste, stay not.* Jonathan is eager to have the boy gather the arrows that he may be sent away and he himself be free to talk with David.—*His weapons.* His bow and quiver.

41. *Out of a place toward the South.* Hebrew, *from beside the South,* RVm. From a hiding-place to the south of the stone Ezel, verse 18.—*Bowed himself three times.* See below. "He did obeisance and called him the savior of his life" (*Josephus*).—*Kissed one another.* See below.—*David exceeded.* "Broke down." Wept one with another. "Friendship's one infallible test is that it draws nearer to its object in the time of trouble" (*Fitzgerald*).

42. *Go in peace.* The customary phrase for farewell.—*As we have sworn.* See verses 12-17, 23.—*Jehovah shall be between me and thee.* Not to separate, but to draw closer together. The Moslem also says, "There is none between us but Allah."—*Between my seed and thy seed.* See verse 15. The solemn oath is to be binding upon their posterity.—*He arose and departed.* We hear of the friends meeting again only once, and then by stealth, 23.16.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

30. *He said unto him, Thou son of a perverse, rebellious woman.* This is a favorite oriental mode of abuse. It is supposed that an indignity offered to a man's mother will give him greater pain than one offered to himself. "Strike me," said the servant of Mungo Park, "but do not curse my mother." Sir W. Ouseley tells of a man, who, seeking for wine, put to his lips a bottle of nauseous medicine, and immediately cursed, not the man who made the disgusting draught, but his wives, mother, daughters, and sisters. *Burder, Oriental Customs.*

There are some traces of this form of abuse, in principle, among the least refined portion of our own population; but in the East no man is too high or too refined to be above it. Even a son will abuse his brother by casting contumely upon his mother, regardless of the fact that she is also his own mother, and whom, as such, he venerates and loves. *Kitto.*

41. *Fell on his face to the ground and bowed himself three times.* Thus David showed respect to Jonathan as his superior, for Jonathan was the king's son. See Gen. 33.3;42.6. In many mosques Mohammedans today kneel and touch the ground with their foreheads repeatedly.

41. *They kissed one another and wept one with another.* Men in the East are more emotional than Westerners and they do not deem it unmanly to give expression to their emotion. The custom of embracing and kissing among men is not uncommon even in Germany and France today, as well as in the Orient.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What famous friendships have our lessons already recorded? How did Ruth form her friendship for Naomi? When did Jonathan and David first meet? How did Jonathan intercede with his father for David in our last lesson? Why did Saul hate David? Why did Jonathan love David?

After Michal saved David from Saul. David escaped to Ramah, where Samuel was, and the two dwelt at Naioth, in Ramah. When Saul learned where David was, he sent messengers to capture him, but on reaching the company of the prophets they were seized with prophetic frenzy, as were also the second and third messengers whom Saul sent. Then Saul himself came in pursuit of David, and he, too, prophesied: then arose the saying, Is Saul also among the prophets?

David returned to Gibeah and sought Jonathan. When David told him that his father was seeking his life, Jonathan was unwilling to believe that his father would actually kill David and insisted that his father did nothing without telling him of it. But David replied that the king knew Jonathan loved him, David, and therefore hid his purpose from his son. David appealed to Jonathan to find out Saul's real purpose, and the two decided upon this plan. A dinner was to be given at the palace on the next day, from which

David would be absent, and the king's word in regard to David's absence would disclose his feelings toward David. Jonathan would come to the field where David would be in hiding and practice with bow and arrows. If Jonathan said to the boy who was to go for the arrows, "The arrows are on this side," David would know that he could return to the palace in safety. But if Jonathan said, "The arrows are beyond thee," David would know that he must flee for his life. At the same time the two friends entered into a covenant of perpetual friendship.

Egyptian Archer Carrying Extra Arrows

The Tragedy of Saul's Life. It is long since Saul has made any effort to control his anger. When he became convinced that his son was taking David's part, "his anger was kindled," and so fierce was the flame that he reviled Jonathan's mother, his own wife, and tried to kill Jonathan, his own son. Saul's life is a tragedy, the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service for his kingdom, giving loose reins to his selfishness and evil temper. When a lion is angry he is sometimes so occupied with the violent manifestations of his anger—shaking his mane and flogging his sides with his tail—that he gives his would-be prey time to make good his escape. So Saul's loss of self-control and his violent display of anger to his son, allowed David to escape.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The first scene is at the King's residence in Gibeah; see p. 154. The second scene is in the adjoining country.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Do your pupils regard you as their friend? At a Y.M.C.A. meeting recently a large number of the boys were asked, one by one, the name and address of their Sunday-school teachers, and a remarkably large percentage were not sure either of the name or the address of their teachers. Can such things be?

The address to Mission Boards adopted by the Zürich Convention of the World's Sunday-school Association contains these words: It is one of the marked advantages of the Sunday-school relation that it brings the teacher into contact with a group of scholars whose interests he may, and if faithful must, bear personally upon his heart, to whom he may make the appeal of intimate friendship, and for whose individual welfare he may plan. In its opportunity for winning to discipleship and for following with a loving Christian influence, this work offers to the members of the churches direct and immediate opportunity for entering into a noble Christian service.

Says one: As we think back, it is clear to us that the most fruitful part of our teacher's work was the friendly interest that operated outside the class. The invitation to tea; the book that was lent us; the social hour with the teacher's heart at leisure to speak a word of praise and encouragement; the visit in quietness; the country walks; and the homeward walk in the gloaming, when, perchance, the talk took on an earnest tone, and some quiet appeal was made for surrender to Christ; the discovery that someone was praying for us; the hand grip when first we made the great confession with beating heart; the letter that came to us when away from home; the friendly word that influenced an employer to give us the first chance at work. These and a hundred other unrecorded acts of personal friendship were the things that found us.

And there is the other side of the shield. Although some pupils never express in words their friendship for their teacher, the teacher can count upon it. There is a world of heartfelt joy and inspiration for renewed efforts for the teacher who wins the friendship of his pupils, for his love is repaid tenfold.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Recall the killing of Goliath by David as the beginning of Jonathan's love for David. Jonathan stood by while King Saul talked with David after his victory, and "Jonathan loved David" for what he had done. David had been very brave in killing Goliath. How had Jonathan proved that he was very brave in attacking the Philistines in their camp? David had trusted in God to help him kill the giant and Jonathan had trusted in God to help him make his brave attack, with only his armor-bearer, upon the Philistines. The two were much alike in many noble ways, and it was natural that they should become great friends. Have you ever heard it said of two boys that they are like David and Jonathan? When two boys are such great friends that they want to be together all the time and share all their fun together, we call them David and Jonathan. The real David and Jonathan were together at the royal palace for awhile, and then Saul, you remember, became so jealous of David that he wanted to have him killed, and David had to hide from Saul. But David could not stay away from Jonathan. He did not dare go to the palace, but he met Jonathan in a near-by field, and there they promised to be friends as long as they lived. They made a secret plan by which Jonathan could let David know whether it would be safe for David to come back to the palace.

After telling the lesson story, call for the Golden Text, and explain its meaning to be that if you want to have others love you and be your friends you must always be loving and friendly to them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. There was once a convict in France who gave his keepers much trouble. He was always sullen and sometimes violent. Suddenly his manner changed, and he was seen to smile often, and to look down at his coat pocket. His guards became uneasy, fearing he had in some way secured a weapon, and two of them overpowered and searched him. You could never guess what it was they found—a large rat! The convict had tamed and made a pet of it, and when it was taken from him he begged for its life. The rat was allowed to escape, and the convict was again sullen as before. Then one day the guard who was overseeing the men at their work heard this man utter a cry of joy, and saw the lost rat on his shoulder. Eagerly he begged to be allowed to keep it, promising never again to give any trouble; the permission was given and he became a changed man, one of the best in prison. In his spare time he made toys to sell so as to buy sugar and other things for his pet.

Every one needs some friend whom he can love, and when a man like this convict can have no human friend he can sometimes find happiness in the companionship of a pet as undesirable even as a rat.

We heard last week about the friendship of two young men. Who were they? What did Jonathan do for David?

For Older Pupils. What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance? Between a friend and a comrade? What is a friend? What will a friend do for another? What does Shakespeare say should be done with one whose friendship has been tried? What beautiful story of friendship between two women is told in the Bible? What is the most famous story of friendship between two men? Why were David and Jonathan such true friends? Which one do you admire the more? How did Saul try to break up their friendship?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Having A Friend

The Effect upon a Young Man of Having a Friend. I heard the other day of an artist in my own country, a man of considerable note, who had a young friend who was an undergraduate in one of our universities. One day he went up to see him at Oxford, and on going into his room found that he was out on the playing fields. He took the opportunity of his absence to

glance about the room; and as you know, one can usually tell the kind of man or woman who inhabits a room or a house by its decorations and the like. His heart was pained and disappointed as he saw there evidences of looseness. There were photographs and pictures of a kind that seemed to show that this young man was living wrongly. The artist went back to London after spending the evening with his friend, took one of his own beautiful pictures, packed it carefully and sent it up to the university as a present to his friend. The young man, greatly appreciating the gift, hung it upon his walls. And before long there was a change there. That beautiful picture soon made short work of the jockeys and actress there. The incongruity of the whole thing soon challenged the young man's sense of what was fitting; and his rooms at least were purified by the introduction of that which was beautiful and lofty. That is but an illustration of what Jesus does when we are "with him". The incongruity of the unworthy things in life challenges our sincerity; and love for him inspires the purifying of its entire area. Thus the one who companies with him becomes like him, by the working of the law of association. And this is the work which will only be complete when one day we see him as he is. *J. Stuart Holden* in *The Life of Fuller Purpose.*

One of the Pathetic Things of Old Age is the Passing of One's Friends. Unless the mature man knows how to keep his friendships in good repair, and maintain his capacity for new frienships, he will find himself as solitary as the oak that grows alone in the pasture. At the beginning of life, the child is knitted in with a multitude of companions, through schoolroom and playground, but in middle life the threads are slowly cut, and one by one the companions disappear. How immeasurable the loneliness that results! There are scarred men who are late lingerers upon the scene, who live in this city of five millions as solitary as Robinson Crusoe on his lonely island. One bough our hands can break from the tree of life, and carry home to heaven—the golden bough of friendship. To make a few friends, to give as much as we receive, remembering that all friendship is an exchange of affections—this is success. The measure of life is the number of hours we have to love, and to be loved, in friendship, after we have earned our livelihood. These are true treasures of the heart, such as "moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal." The books hold high forms of wisdom, yet there is a distillation of wisdom that is never found in books but is distilled in the heart of a friend.

Alas for those who made friends in youth, and then gave themselves to business, and now in old age discover that the friends of their youth are gone, and that they stand alone, neglected, solitary, friendless! Be wise, for the time is short. Blessed are those merchants and publicists, who, as old men, have searched out some young men, given them friendship, and made themselves immortal by repeating themselves in younger hearts and lives. *Condensed* from *All the year Round* by *Newell Dwight Hillis.*

The Greatest Hardship which Missionaries have to endure is Separation from Friends. In the "Life of David Brainerd" we read: "I have no comfort of any kind but what I have in God. I live in the most lonesome wilderness, and have but one person to converse with who can speak English, an Indian. I have no fellow Christian to whom I can unbosom myself."

When Henry Martyn was dying, alone save for a brutal Tartar servant, who was hurrying him along on that journey which he was too weak to endure, he wrote: "No horses being to be had, I had an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God, in solitude my Companion, my Friend and my Comforter."

II Being A Friend

A Friend Loveth at All Times. Here is a friend who risked something for his friendship. Jonathan risked the anger of his father rather than prove disloyal to his friend. He is unworthy of the royal name of "friend" who has misgivings on the first "dark and cloudy day". The quality of friendship is in the crisis. Its courage rises with danger. It always shines most brilliantly in a frowning environment. It is then like a gem set in dark plush.

And Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God (1 S. 23.15-18). What a gracious service for friend to render to friend! It is

a beautiful ministry to take our friend "a cup of cold water;" it is a still more beautiful thing to take our friend to the springs. It is good when I give my friend my hand: it is infinitely better when I put his hand into the hand of God! But we are so often contented with the subordinate ministry, and we forget the better and the best. The friends of the palsied did their best for their brother when they carried him to the Lord.

Is it any wonder that this man Jonathan, who so eagerly sought the heavenly throne for his friend, should now be perfectly willing to surrender the earthly throne? *Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee.* There is no more exquisite self-forgetfulness in the Word of God, except the incomparable example of our Lord, who vacated the heavenly throne, "and made himself of no reputation," that he might redeem us from our bondage, and lift us into glorious sovereignties of which we had never even dreamed. The real friend is ever willing to surrender the throne to him who has won his heart and love. *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

Is your Friendship Pine-Log Friendship? There is a little book called "Brown Studies," written by George Hepworth. The hero is spending a winter in the Adirondack Mountains. One night he asks the guide to make a fire for him. The fire lasts a couple of hours and goes out. While he sits pondering over the smoking ashes the guide enters. "Your fire is nearly out," the man remarks, as though it were some fault of the guide's. "'Twas dry pine," he responds. "Well, what of it?" "Nothing, sir, except that it's always so with pine. It catches quickly, it blazes up quickly, it's awful hot while it lasts, but it goes out quick and leaves you in a lurch. Shall I bring in another armful?" "No, John, I'm going to bed. Good night." But the man sat an hour longer gazing at the flickering embers. "Quick to come, hot while it lasts, and quick to go"—he repeats the words again and again, for they seem to have a subtle meaning that he can not at first fathom. They ring in his ears like a village church-bell tolling for a funeral. "It is ever so with pine-log friendship. It is quick to come, hot while it lasts, and quick to go," finally he says.

Is there Someone who Needs you as a Friend? A few years ago, two young men who belonged to influential families in a manufacturing city sat together in a cozy little reading room, reading the morning papers.

"That mill boy Jones who murdered Saunders, down at the Point, is sentenced to be hanged, I see," said one of them. "Yes," said his companion.

His friend laid down the paper. "I notice," he said, thoughtfully, "that he had neither father, mother, friend nor comrade to stand near him in the dock." "No? What of it?" "Perhaps that was the reason he was there."

His friend did not care to follow his meaning, and rose, yawning, to go out. He paid no more attention to the case, except to go out of town on the day of the hanging, that he might hear nothing of it. He always protected himself from pain and trouble.

But his companion kept the thought of the friendless murderer on his mind. There were scores of other mill boys in the town. Had they friends? Did any man care for their souls?

In a quiet way he gathered four or five of them into a class. These he taught to read and write. He learned also to know them and their companions, to look at life from their point of view, to understand their hopes and needs.

He soon succeeded in interesting some of his friends in them, and they established a reading-room, and one or two co-operative societies, temperance clubs and an evening school. In six years he had succeeded in elevating the whole mass of working men in two or three of the mills to the higher level. *Youth's Companion.*

True Friendship is Unselfish. Convey thy love to thy friend, as an arrow to the mark, to stick there, not as a ball against the wall, to rebound back to thee; that friendship will not continue to the end that is begun for an end. *Quarles.*

Being a Friend of God. "I have never known a case of deep, habitual piety," writes Horace Bushnell, "when the friendship of God has through a long course of years been the element of life, where the person did not come to be regarded as a remarkable person. He sees God in everything that befalls him,

and that makes everything great. God is leading him on through a great history. And this imparts an air of sublimity to his expressions and his character."

Jews and Mohammedans call Abraham "The Friend of God". There have been other notable Friends of God. Lord Wolseley calls General Gordon "God's Friend," and in his "Story of a Soldier's Life" he writes of Gordon as interested solely in furthering his Friend's interests. "Gordon absolutely ignored self in all he did, and only took in hand what he conceived to be God's work. Life was to him but a Pilgrim's Progress between the years of early manhood and the heaven he now dwells in, the home he always longed for. When in any difficulty his first thought was: 'What would my Master do, were he now in my place?' It was this constant reliance upon his Maker, this spiritual communing with his Saviour upon every daily occurrence of life, that enabled him absolutely to ignore self and to take no heed for what tomorrow might bring forth."

III The Greatest Friendships

A Mother's Friendship. This is the second Sunday in May and the day which many churches and Sunday schools select for a special recognition of one of the tenderest of human friendships. On this day President Wilson and his Cabinet and members of Congress are wearing white carnations in token of special homage to motherhood, and are attending services devoted to an observance of the special occasion.

I hope that every man and woman, boy or girl, in our State may learn to value at its own supreme worth the counsel, the self-sacrifices, and the unfailing love which only a devoted mother can give (Governor Foss of Massachusetts).

In all nature there is nothing so tender and loving and joyous as the relationship between mother and child (Governor Osborne of Michigan).

Show reverence and respect for the best friend that God ever gave us (Governor Weeks of Connecticut).

Contrast the value placed upon a mother's friendship in our land with the treatment accorded her in Mohammedan lands. A Christian was walking the streets of Cairo one day with a well-to-do Mohammedan when the latter contemptuously kicked aside a veiled figure that was shrinking out of the way.

"Your treatment of woman is one of the great differences between your religion and ours!" exclaimed the Christian. "In my country we would not treat even a passing dog in that fashion."

"That?" answered the Mohammedan in surprise, "Why, that was only my mother!"

The Greatest Friend.

O thou, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling-place.—*Robert Burns.*

Your Best Friend. Dr. J. R. Miller's creed, it is said, could be expressed in five words: "Christ and I are friends", and all who knew him felt that he lived in very close communion with that Friend. "Christ is our Friend: that means everything we need", wrote Dr. Miller in one of his books. "No want can be unsupplied. No sorrow can be uncomforted. No evil can overmaster us. For time and eternity we are safe. It will not be the streets of gold, and the gates of pearl, and the river and the trees that will make heaven for us—it will be the companionship, the friendship of Christ. The consciousness that Christ is our Friend and we are his should check every evil thought, quell every bitter feeling, sweeten every emotion, and make all our life holy, true and heavenly."

And in a friendly letter Dr. Miller said: "What I want to help you to understand is that Christ is your truest and best friend. And you, being a Christian, are Christ's friend. That is, you have accepted his love, letting him into your heart, and have begun to love him in return. Religion really narrows itself down to a single statement—"Christ and I are friends." Prayer

is simply your talk with Christ, as you would sit down with any dear, tender, close and trusted human friend for a little talk. When you realize that Christ and you are friends, close, tender friends—that Christ is your infinite Helper as well as your Saviour—you will not have any trouble about prayers. You will be eager to sit down at his feet, as Mary sat, listening to his words."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Saul was not a comfortable man to live with at any time. No one likes to live near a mountain that is liable to a sudden volcanic eruption. No one enjoys living with a boy who, on the slightest provocation, or none at all, is liable to shower one with a whole vocabulary of angry words.

This is Addison's definition of friendship: A strong and habitual inclination of two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other. For whom have you such inclination? Are you doing what you can to help make this year 1915 the Happy New Year that a few months ago you were wishing your friends? Are you worthy of another's true friendship? Dr. Jowett, in discussing "capital and interest" as they bear on investments in friendship, pertinently asks, "From the standpoint of common trade, have we any right to expect returns?"

Is your friendship with Christ as real an experience as it might be? Are you as anxious to serve him as Jonathan was to serve his friend? What have you done for him this past week? What can and will you do for him this coming week? All around us are people going wrong for lack of the Divine Friend. What can you do to bring them to Christ?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Friendship. See "The Little Sign for Friend," *Atlantic*, May, 1914; Chapter on "The Higher Friendship", in "Friendship", by *Hugh Black*.

2. Was Saul insane? The only hospital solely for the insane in all the Turkish Empire is that of the Friends' Foreign Missionary Society opened at Brummana, near Beirut, Syria, in 1900. Of the thousand patients who have been treated there, two hundred and ninety have recovered. Money is needed for extension of this work.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. Where did David go when he fled from Saul? 2. How did David escape from Achish? 3. In what cave did he live for a time? 4. How did his force increase? 5. What happened at En-gedi? 6. What are some of the things that David and his men did? 7. Where did Jonathan come to see him and what did Jonathan say to him? 8. Tell the story about Nabal and Abigail. 9. How many men did David have with him? 10. Who were the Hittites? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 216.) 11. How were Abishai and Joab related to David? (1 Ch. 2.16.) 12. What can you learn about Abishai? (2 S. 3.30; 10.10; 16.9; 18.2; 21.17.) 13. How did Joab meet his death? (1 K. 1.7; 2 K. 28-34.) 14. Where was Saul encamped? 15. When did Jonathan call to the people from a height? 16. What effect did David's magnanimity have upon Saul? 17. How did Saul finally meet his death? (1 S. 31.) 18. Where can you find these words: Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, said the Lord? (Dt. 32.35; Rom. 12.19.) 19. What is said about vengeance in Rom. 12.19? 20. About treatment of enemies in Rom. 12.20-21?

Questions to think about. 1. Why were the spear and the cruse of water at the king's head? (*Guide*, p. 218.) 2. What is meant by "a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them"? 3. Why did David not allow Abner to kill Saul? 4. What kind of treatment did Saul deserve from David? 5. Would it be easy to call across the great distance? (*Guide*, ¶ 2, p. 218.) 6. How are David's questions in verse 15 to be understood? 7. Would it have been contrary to the custom of the time for David to take Saul's life? 8. Is it ever right to take vengeance for an injustice or unkindness? 9. What qualities has David shown so far in our study of his life, and character?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount about treatment of enemies. In your Life of David, write Part V, The Friendship of David and Jonathan.

LESSON VII—MAY 16

DAVID SPARES SAUL

Golden Text

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Luke 6.27

LESSON 1 Samuel 26: verses 5-16 printed MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? 10 And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish. 11 Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed; but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. 12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it or knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; 14 and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? 15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a *valiant* man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. 16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

5. *And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped.* See the Historical and the Geographical Background.—*The place of the wagons.* Or, *barricade* RVm. Probably a military term for "camp"; the wagons were arranged in a circle and in the center slept the king and the men with him.

6. *The Hittite.* From Assyrian and Egyptian inscriptions we know that a branch of the Hittites living in the neighborhood of Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh on the Orontes, was powerful enough between the sixteenth and eighth centuries B. C. to menace both those great powers. In the eighth century B. C. Assyria destroyed their power. In Canaan they were settled chiefly near Hebron, and Bethel; they were well provided with chariots, 1 K. 10.29; 2 K. 7.6. Uriah was another famous Hittite in David's service.—*The son of Zeruiah.* Zeruiah was David's sister, hence Abishai and Joab were his nephews. David was the youngest of a large family, and these nephews may have been about David's age. "We can account for their designation by their mother's name (rather than that of their father) only by supposing that their father was a foreigner, and the marriage was one of those in which the wife remained in her own clan and the children were counted to that clan; compare 2 S. 17.25"

(*Smith*). We hear much about these "soldiers of fortune" in the life of David: Abishai and Joab both shared in the command of the army and were implicated in the murder of Abner, 2 S. 3.30; 10.10; in Absalom's rebellion they were faithful to David, 2 S. 16.9; 18.2; Abishai saved David's life in one of his Philistine wars, 2 S. 21.17; but Joab supported Adonijah in his rebellion and was put to death by Solomon's order, 1 K. 1.7; 2 K. 28-34.—*Who will go down with me to Saul?* Read 1 Ch. 11. 20-25; 12.8-18 for an insight into the kind of men that had rallied around David: such a proposed exploit must have appealed to all of them.

7. *To the people.* To Saul's army, 1 S. 14.45.—*With his spear stuck in the ground at his head.* The spear which we heard about in our last two lessons, the symbol of royal authority. See below.

8. *God hath delivered up thine enemy unto thy hand.* "Abishai was religious after a strange, fierce, fashion. God had delivered Saul into David's hands, and it would be a kind of sin not to kill him. How many bloody tragedies that same unnatural alliance of religion and murderous hate has varnished over!" (*Maclaren*).—*Let me smite him.* David could have permitted Abishai to do the slaying and have professed himself guiltless of the deed.—*At one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time.* One blow from Abishai's powerful hand would be sufficient to kill the king. To slay a sleeping enemy was considered cowardly even in these far-away times.

9. *Destroy him not.* "Mighty of heart, mighty of mind—magnanimous—to be this is indeed to be great in life" (*Ruskin*). See Luke 6, 28, 28.

10. *As Jehovah liveth.* A solemn oath. *Jehovah will smite him.* Jehovah will fulfill his own purposes. Saul shall meet his death as Jehovah wills, not as David wills. Say not thou, I will recompense evil: wait for Jehovah, and he will save thee, Prov. 20.22.—*Or . . . or. Either . . . or,* RVm.—*His day shall come to die.* By a sudden stroke or by any natural death.—*He shall go down into battle and perish.* So it was that he eventually met his death.

11. *Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed.* "I will premit no enemy to degrade my soul to the level of hatred" (*Booker T. Washington*).—*The cruse of water.* A water-jug of earthenware.

12. *A deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.* So deep was their sleep that it is explained as sent by God.

13. *Went over to the other side.* See the Geographical Background.

14. *David cried to the people.* Orientals can make themselves heard across "a great space", verse 13: see ¶ 2, p. 218. So Jotham delivered his parable from a hillside. Judges 9.7.—*To Abner.* It was Abner's duty to watch over his king's life.—*Who art thou that criest to the king?* Who art thou that criest and disturbest the king? Vulgate Version. Who is so brazen as to venture to disturb the king?

15. *Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel?* How these sarcastic questions must have irritated Abner!

16. *Worthy to die.* Hebrew, *sons of death,* RVm.—*Now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head.* These objects were evidently held aloft as David said this, new evidences of the fact that he who had taken these away from beside the king could have easily taken the king's life instead.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *Take the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water.* The spear was held in hand when the king sat in his palace or held council with his officers (1 S. 19.9; 22.6); it was kept at his side when he sat at table (1 S. 20.33); it marked the royal resting-place in camp (1 S. 26.11). In "The Land and the Book", Mr. Thomson says:

I noticed at all the encampments which we passed that the sheik's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that, when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or rests is thus designated. The whole of the scene in 1 Sam. 26 is perfectly natural, even to the deep sleep into which all had fallen, so that David and Abishai could walk among them in safety. The Arabs sleep heavily, especially when

fatigued. Often, when travelling, my muleteers and servants have agreed to watch together in places thought to be dangerous; but in every instance I soon found them to be fast asleep, and generally their slumbers were so profound that I could not only walk among them without their waking, but might have taken the very aba with which they were covered. Then the cruse of water at Saul's head is in exact accordance with the customs of the people at this day. No one ventures to travel over those deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place it at the bolster, so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst, and the quantity of water which they drink is enormous. The cruse is therefore in perpetual demand.

Spear and Cruse

13-14. *David stood on the top of the mountain afar off, and cried to the people.* As a rule, the peasants have very loud voices, and, as the deep valleys which separate the mountains carry the sound very well, they call to each other across formidable distances. To call attention they call out *Hay ya . . .* So and so, *Hay!* and when the person addressed has heard, he answers, *Hay!* This calling is loud, but calm and distinct (to their ears), and they understand every word. The Hebrews also had very loud voices; the most remarkable and seemingly unnecessary case, was when Joshua read the law to the people from Ebal to Gerizim. The case of Jotham calling down to Shechem from the top of Gerizim is excusable and easy, as he had to tell his parable insulting Abimelech, and then flee southwards before the servants of Abimelech could climb the mountain (Judges 9.7-21). David calling out to Saul across the steep valley of Khreitun was the easiest task; the voice carries excellently there against the high rocks, and escape is easy. *Palestine Exploration Fund.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What Judge reached an enemy's camp without being discovered? For what lesson was "Honor the King" a part of our Golden Text? On what occasion did Saul show himself magnanimous? How has Saul treated David?

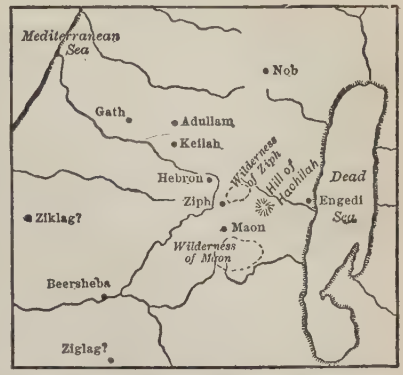
David at Nob. After the interview with Jonathan in the field near Gibeah, David led the life of an outlaw. He fled first to Nob. where "on the slope of Olivet, overlooking the still unconquered city of Jerusalem, all unconscious of the future sanctity of that venerable hill, stood the last relic of the ancient nomadic times—the Tabernacle of the Wanderings, round which since the fall of Shiloh had dwelt the descendents of the house of Eli. It was a little colony of priests. No fewer than eighty-five persons ministered there in the white linen dress of the priesthood, and all their families and herds were gathered round them." David was famished and unarmed and he besought Ahimelech the priest to give him the shew bread. Ahimelech was cautious, but David claimed to be on a secret mission from Saul, and the priest yielded, giving him five loaves of the sacred bread which had been in the Tabernacle and also Goliath's sword, which David had won and placed in the sanctuary. The consequences for this little colony of priests were terrible, for Doeg, the Edomite, was present at the time and later he informed Saul of the service rendered David, and Saul ordered a ruthless massacre of all the priests and their households. Only Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escaped and fled to David. This incident is the only one in the life of David to which Christ referred, using it as an example of the fact that the claims of humanity are greater than that of the ceremonial law. "Have ye not read what David did when he was hungry?" he asked. "How he entered into the house of God, and ate the shew bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?"

In the Wilderness of Judea. From Ahimelech David went to Achish, King of Gath, but fearing that Achish would slay him he feigned madness in order to escape. He found a hiding-place in the Cave of Adullam. Hear-

ing of this, his own kindred and some four hundred men came to him, "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him." After taking his parents for safety to Mizpeh of Moab, he returned to Judah, to the forest of Hereth.

With his band of valiant men, now grown to six hundred, David rescued the town of Keilah from the Philistines, but fearing that the people whom he had saved would deliver him up to Saul, he left for the wilderness of Ziph. Here Jonathan came to him and "strengthened his hand in God". "Fear not; thou shalt be King over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee," said that great-hearted friend whom he never saw again.

The Ziphites betrayed David's hiding-place to the King, and Saul came in pursuit. Guided by Ziphite spies, Saul and the men almost surrounded David in the wilderness of Maon, but David escaped just in time. Fortunately, Saul was recalled to fight the Philistines. David and his followers took refuge in the rocks and caves of Engedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea.



Map Showing David's Haunts During His Life as an Outlaw

The death of the prophet Samuel is recorded. Next we are told about David's request for food from Nabal, because he and his men had afforded Nabal's shepherds protection, Nabal's curt refusal, his wife Abigail's gifts and intercession, the death of Nabal, and David's marriage to Abigail. He also married Abinoam of Jezreel. Meanwhile Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to one of his men.

David's Magnanimity. Again the Ziphites informed Saul that David was hiding in their wilderness on the hill of Hachilah before the desert, and with three thousand men Saul came to capture him. David's expedition to Saul's camp is the theme of our lesson. After the conversation with Abner, Saul himself spoke. "Is this thy voice, my son David?" he called, and David answered, "It is my voice, my lord, O King." Then David appealed to Saul, asking him why he persisted in pursuing him. If Jehovah had instigated him to this enmity let him be appeased by an offering, but if men had stirred Saul up against him let them be accursed; for they had driven him away from the land of Israel and in a foreign land he must serve other gods. "Let me not die a violent death in a heathen land," he urged, and added that it was unworthy of the king's dignity to hunt him, who was so insignificant and helpless.

Humbly Saul confessed that he had done wrong, and promised that he would not harm him. Perhaps he was sincerely repentant for the moment, his better nature being aroused by David's wondrous magnanimity in sparing his life, but David did not trust the feeling to be lasting. He bade the king send a young man for the spear, and reminded him, that, as he had spared the king's life, so the Lord would reward him and deliver him out of all tribulation. "Thou shalt surely prevail," the king said, and they parted never to meet again. Saul returned to Gibeah and David fled to the Philistines.

The Two Accounts of David's Sparing Saul's Life. At En-gedi, Saul unknowingly entered the cave in whose farthest recesses David was hiding, and his men told David that Jehovah had delivered his enemy into his hand. But David refused to touch "Jehovah's anointed," and merely cut off the bottom of Saul's robe. When Saul left the cave David followed, and showed him his trophy in proof that he had spared his life. "Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and said, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil." This account has so much in common with the sparing of Saul's life which is the subject of our lesson today, and it is so unnatural that such an event should take place twice, that the two ac-

counts are probably two different versions of one event. See ¶ 3, p. 30. After this event Saul returned to Gibeah and David fled to the Philistines.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In connection with the Historical Background study the map, which shows the haunts of David during his life as an outlaw.

"The story of Saul's hunt after David, and of David's narrow escape, becomes very vivid among these tossed and broken hills of Judea where the valleys are all alike and large bodies of men may camp near each other without knowing it," writes Dr. George Adam Smith in his Geography. "Ambushes are everywhere possible, and alarms pass rapidly across the bare and silent hills. You may travel for hours, and feel as solitary as at sea without a sail in sight; but if you are in search of anyone, your guide's signal will make men leap from slopes that did not seem to shelter a rabbit; and if you are suspected, your passage may be stopped by a dozen men, as if they had sprung from the earth."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Back in the days when David was a lad on his father's farm at Bethlehem, there were three boys about his own age, living with him. Their names were Joab and Asahel and Abishai. Although these boys were as old as David, they were really his nephews, the sons of a sister much older than he, for David belonged to a large family, you know. He was the youngest of eight brothers and had several older sisters. When David had to hide from Saul, because Saul was seeking him everywhere in order to kill him, David found a hiding place in a large cave. It was called the Cave of Adullam. Many of his friends, who did not like Saul, joined David, and among them were Joab and Abishai. (Describe their life in the wilderness.) David's father Jesse and David's mother came, too, but David found they would not be safe with him, so he went on a long journey with them, to the king of Moab, and asked him to keep them in safety. All this time Saul was hunting David. The Ziphites, in whose wild country David was living, went to Gibeah and told the King where David was. Saul came with a great army, three thousand men, to capture David. David had only six hundred men with him. One night David came out of his hiding place where Saul was sleeping.

Describe the wagons arranged in a circle, the king and Abner and other men sleeping on the ground in the center, the king's tall spear stuck into the ground by his side and showing David where the king was. Give David's question, and the answer of several who thought that no one could go there without being killed, and Abishai's answer. Describe the cautious advance to the very side of the king. Give in whispers the conversation between David and Abishai. Draw on the board a spear and a cruse. Describe the cautious return. Then picture David and Abishai standing on a cliff, Abishai holding up the spear and cruse. Give the conversation with Abner. Show Doré's picture of "David showing Saul that he has spared his life," Wilde No. 480. Give David's conversation with Saul. Throughout the lesson let your pupils see the nobility of David's treatment of the man who hated him and would kill him. Tell them about Hudson Taylor. (See p. 222.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is an "enemy"? Of course there is no one who hates you, nor whom you hate. But there may be some one who dislikes you or who is unfair to you, or some one whom you dislike or distrust. Is it easy to treat such a one fairly? How about treating him in a friendly way? What did Christ say about the way we should treat an enemy? One would not expect a man who lived in Old Testament times, who did not have a knowledge of Christ and his teachings, to do good to one who hated him, but this is what our hero David did. Where do we find David at the beginning of our lesson? Point it out on the map. Where was he in our lesson of last week? Where did he go after bidding good-bye to Jonathan?

For Older Pupils. Question the class about Robin Hood, the famous outlaw of England, and then about the life of David as an outlaw, which is

equally exciting. Read the chapters intervening between the last lesson and this, and make them vividly real to them.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Willingness to Wait God's Time

David's Self-Restraint. Think of how Saul has treated David! Instead of rewarding David for what he had done for him and his country, Saul has tried to have others kill him and has even himself made several attempts upon his life, and has thus driven him from home and country, forcing him to wander about in the wilderness of Judea, and pursuing him as one would a wild animal from place to place, so that David was never sure of his life from one hour to another. Must not David have longed to be free from his deadly enemy? Thoughts such as these must have coursed through his brain as he stood beside the sleeping king, now wholly in his power: "There he lies, the wicked king, who has treated me, his faithful servant, so shamefully. Revenge is sweet. He deserves to be killed, for he has tried so many times to kill me. Moreover, we are engaged in warfare, he and his thousands and I and my hundreds, and to kill an enemy in warfare is no sin—The night is dark, and no one will see us. It is true, as my faithful Abishai has said, God has delivered him into my hands. I shall never have peace until this man is dead, and once he is dead, I can return to my beloved land in safety. Yes, I can even be king, held in honor by all the people!"

But other thoughts, too, came to David: "Do it not. God has said, Thou shalt not kill. And he has said also, Vengeance is mine, I will repay. Saul is not an enemy like the Philistines; he belongs to my own nation, and although he is at war with me, I am not at war with him, I am only on the defensive. Even if no one sees me, God sees. Although Abishai counsels me to revenge myself and commit murder, God counsels otherwise. And it is no common man who lies here so sound asleep before me; he is God's anointed, his life must be held sacred by me. Granted that I could gain outward peace and rest by his death, my conscience would never give me peace within, and to be tormented by my conscience would be worse than to be tormented by Saul. If God wills to make me king, he will do it in his own good time. Patience, all is in God's hands, he will bring Saul to that end which is in accordance with his designs, and me to the throne when the right time comes. Saul shall live, and I shall endure, till then." In some such way as this David fought out the battle within himself, and won the victory over his own desire for revenge, and for preeminence. It was a greater victory than that which he had won over the giant Goliath. To fight self is the hardest of all battles, to conquer self is the greatest of all victories.

When Men are Impatient. Into how many sins have men been betrayed through unwillingness to wait for God's time! A young man embarks in the pursuit of commerce; but the gains to be derived from ordinary business come in far too slowly for him; he makes haste to be rich, engages in gigantic speculations, plunges into frightful gambling, and in a few years brings ruin on himself and all connected with him. How many sharp transactions continually occur just because men are impatient, and wish to hurry on some consummation which their hearts are set on! Have not murders often taken place just to hasten the removal of some who occupied places that others were eager to fill? *W. R. Nicoll, Expositor's Bible.*

David's Waiting was Rewarded. The day arrived when David came into his own, when the injustice ceased, when of their own free will the whole of the tribes of Israel offered him the loyalty of their hearts and swore allegiance to his throne. You say, "All things come to him who waits." That is not certain, but this is sure. "All things that are most worth having come to him who trusts and obeys the voice of God." And if you could have seen into the heart of David on the day of his coronation, you would have seen profound thankfulness that he had not snatched at the crown, that he had wronged no man to get it, had not stained his soul, or smirched his conscience with one unworthy deed, so that the honor was untarnished as it came to his hand. And you might even have discovered this other emotion, so strangely consti-

tuted are we, viz., thankfulness for the time of testing and trial through which he had passed. For nothing is more remarkable in human life than that looking back over a period of trial, men are able to say, "I would not have been without it, I would have no part of it remitted, I can thank God for it. It could not have been spared from my life. *Charles Brown* in *The Birth of a Nation.*

II Treatment of Enemies

Love your Enemies. Listen to the words of a Christian native of one of the South Sea Islands who once was a cannibal: "When I approached the Communion Table I did not know beside whom I should have to kneel. Then suddenly I saw beside me a man who, some years ago, slew my father and drank his blood, whom I then swore I would kill the first time I should see him. Now, think what I felt when I suddenly knelt beside him. It came upon me with terrible power, and I could not prevent it, and so I went back to my seat. Arriving there I saw in the spirit the upper sanctuary, and seemed to hear a voice saying 'Hereby shall all men learn that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' That made a deep impression on me, and it seemed to me in thought that I saw another sight, a Cross and a Man nailed thereon, and I heard him say, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then I went back to the altar".

"God meant that it should be just as true to say, 'Man is love', as to say 'God is love"; observes Dr. S. D. Gordon. "And some day, when all of his great love has worked out to the full, it *will* be said."

Do Good to them that Hate you. Mr. H. W. Frost, of the China Inland Mission, recalls a characteristic story of Hudson Taylor, who once came to a river, and hired a boatman to ferry him across it. Just after, a Chinese gentleman, in silks and satins, not observing Mr. Taylor, asked the boatman to hire the boat to *him.* This the man refused to do, saying that he had just been engaged to the foreigner. At this the Chinese gentleman looked at Mr. Taylor and dealt him a heavy blow. Mr. Taylor presently recovered himself, and, looking up, saw his assailant standing between himself and the river's brink. In an instant Mr. Taylor raised his hands to give the man a push into the stream; but in an instant more, he dropped his arms and said: "You see I could have pushed you into the stream. But the Jesus whom I serve would not let me do this. You were wrong in striking me, for the boat was mine. And since it is mine, I invite you to share it with me." The Chinese gentleman dropped his head in shame and accepted the hospitality.

III Vengeance

Avenge not Yourselves. A young man who had been insulted by another was resolved to have his revenge. He confided his plan to a friend, an old man. The friend tried his best to change the young man's purpose, but the poison of anger had so entered the young man's soul that he would not heed the words of his friend. Then said the old man: "You are determined to be revenged—well, I will say nothing further against it. But let us pray together before we separate." They knelt down and the old man prayed:—"It is no longer necessary for thee, dear Heavenly Father, to keep this young man under thy protecting care. He is in open rebellion. He will have his own revenge. And thou hast said in thy word, 'Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. He will not heed thy command, but will take vengeance into his own hands. Now, dear Lord, since he will not listen to thy voice, let him go as he wills. But comfort me, dear Lord, for I am much grieved over the young man—I love him and my soul grieves over the course he is taking." Thus the old man prayed, and the heart of the young man was touched. He too, began to pray. He prayed for pardon, and besought God to drive away from his heart the poison of anger and hatred and to give him a heart of love and forgiveness. The prayer was heard and the two enemies became firm friends.

When Forgiveness was Learned.

My heart was heavy, for my trust had been
Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong;
So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men,
One summer Sabbath day I strolled among
The green mounds of the village burial place;
Where, pondering how all human love and hate
One level find; and how, or soon or late,
Wronged and wrong doers, each with meekened face,
And cold hands folded over a still heart,
Pass the green threshold of a common grave,
Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart,
Awed for myself, and pitying my race,
Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,
Swept all my pride away, and I forgave. *Whittier.*

Christ's Example. How often has one heard these wretched sayings, "I'll pay him out;" "I'll put a spoke in his wheel;" "I owe him one for that;" "Ill give him as good as I got!"

Sometimes this becomes a feeble spite; then it deepens into a sullen revenge, such as has turned men into raging maniacs, and women into frightful Maenads. But the spirit of the New Testament is, "Do good to them that hate you." Christ's example was that, being reviled he reviled not again; being persecuted he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Should not the parable of the unforgiving debtor show us that unforgiving is unforgiven, and save us from this fiercely seizing our fellow-servant by the throat and forcing from him the hundred pence? *Dean Farrar.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Words to treasure: "Hath any wronged thee? Be bravely revenged. Slight it, and the work's begun; forgive it, 'tis finished. He is below himself that is not above an injury."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The use of sarcasm.
2. Respect for the office, if not for the one who holds it.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. Give an account of the Battle of Gilboa—the event of the night preceding (1 S. 31.) 2. Read the account of Saul's death in 1 S. 31.1-6; 2 S. 1.1-16. 3. What reasons are given for Saul's death in 1 Ch. 10.13, 14? 4. How did the Philistines treat the bodies of Saul and his sons? (1 S. 31.7-10.) 5. What did the men of Jabesh-gilead do when they learned what had been done? (1 S. 31.11-13.) 6. How did the ancient people regard the fate of having one's body left unburied? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 226.) 7. How did David lament the death of Saul and Jonathan? (2 S. 17-27.) 8. How many men were with David at Ziklag. Give an account of David's life at Ziklag. (*Guide,* p. 226.) 10. What did Nabal refuse to do for David, and how did he meet his death? (1 S. 25.) 11. For what is Hebron famous? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 228.) 12. Who were buried in the cave of Machpelah? (Look up the word *Machpelah* in the Subject-Index of your Bible.) 13. What is the history in the omitted verses of our lesson? 14. With the reasons given for making David king compare Dt. 17.15. 15. What is said in 1 Ch. 12.23-40? 6. Read the 101st Psalm, called the Inauguration Psalm, and conjectured to have been composed in connection with David's anointing at Hebron; according to this Psalm, what were David's standards of conduct and government?

Questions to think about. 1. For what were the men of Jabesh-gilead grateful to Saul? (Lesson XI, First Quarter.) 2. How did David show great tact or diplomacy? (*Guide,* p. 229.) 3. What is the meaning of "requite"? 4. What three reasons did the men of Israel give for asking David to be their king? 5. What is the meaning of "we are thy bone and thy flesh"? 6. What is the meaning of "Thou shalt feed my people Israel"?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of David, write VI., David as an Enemy.

LESSON VIII—MAY 23

DAVID KING OVER JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Golden Text

Jehovah is my strength and my shield;
My heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped. Psalm 28.7

LESSON II Samuel 2.1-7, 5.1-5 MEMORIZE verses 5.2, 3

2 1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. 2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. 5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now Jehovah show loving-kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. 7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

5 1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

2.1. *After this.* After the result of the Battle of Gilboa was announced to David and he had slain the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul, 1 S. 16.—*David inquired of Jehovah.* Through the high priest Abiathar and his Urim and Thummim. See ¶ 5, p. 152. He is still willing to patiently await God's time to gain his throne. "We must apply to God not only when we are in distress, but even when the world smiles upon us, and second causes work in favor of us" (*Matthew Henry.*).—*Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?* He had fled to the Philistines and was living as their vassal. See the Historical Background. He belonged to the tribe of Judah, and could count upon their allegiance in a contest with Abner. "Shall I go *up?*" is the expression used because Judah's territory lay on the highlands, and Ziklag, where David was, was much lower.—*Hebron. See the Geographical Background.*

2.2 *His two wives.* Polygamy was the practice of the times.—*Jezreelitess.* Native of Jezreel. See 1 S. 25.43, 44.—*The wife of Nabal.* The former wife of Nabal: his death and David's marriage to Abigail are recorded in 1 S. 25.36-42.

2.3 *The men that were with him.* Some six hundred, 1 S. 27.2. A detailed account of them is given in the twelfth Chapter of First Chronicles.—*The cities of Hebron.* The cities in the district around about Hebron. Dr. Smith's translation is "the citadel of Hebron".

2.4. *The men of Judah came.* The elders of the tribe of Judah. "How much choice they had in the matter is difficult to say. The master of a devoted band of seasoned soldiers was a dangerous man to reject. On the other hand, the public defence was likely to be well attended to by such a man, and David had always been well-disposed towards his own people. That he continued to acknowledge the suzerainty of Achish seems almost certain, from the fact that the Philistines allowed him to extend his kingdom as far as he did" (*Smith*).—*Anointed David king.* This was his coronation. Recall Samuel's anointing David, Lesson II of this Quarter.—*Over the house of Judah.* Over the tribe of Judah.—*The men of Jabesh-gilead.* Whom Saul had saved from the Ammonites, his first act as king, Lesson XI of First Quarter.—*They that buried Saul.* As narrated in I S. 31.7-13.

2.5-6. *David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead.* David was grateful to them, and at the same time his message was a politic one, for he may have hoped by his meed of praise to win them to his cause, for theirs was an important position among the trans-Jordanic tribes. It was with them that he later found refuge when he was forced to flee from Absalom, 2 S. 17.24-29. —*This kindness.* To bury the dead was regarded as a pious act. See p. 226.—*Requite. Reward.* "Good wishes are good things, and instances of gratitude, but they are too cheap to be rested in where there is an ability to do more" (*Matthew Henry*).

2.7. *Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king.* This is the first time David claimed to be Saul's successor. David's unexpressed meaning is clear: in Matthew Henry's words, "The house of Judah has anointed me king, and it will be your wisdom to concur with them in that to be valiant". David's friendly overtures were not met: well, he could wait yet longer till the right time should come.

5.1. *Then.* The remainder of the second chapter and all of chapters three and four are omitted here, and a period of seven and a half years has elapsed between these two portions of our printed text. Read them carefully, and also pp. 226-228. Ish-bosheth, the only surviving son of Saul, had been king over the northern tribes, but now he and his chief supporter, Abner, have been killed, and there is no longer any member of the house of Saul who can aspire to the throne.—*All the tribes of Israel.* All the tribes except Judah, over whom he had been reigning. They recognize that their best interests lie in a union with Judah under David.—*Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.* Their first reason for making David their king is that they are kinsmen, descended from the same ancestor.

5.2. *It was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.* They had not forgotten that it was David who conquered the giant Philistine, and it was really he, rather than Saul, who had been their leader until driven into exile. This was the second reason for making him their king.—*And Jehovah said to thee.* Their third reason for their choice of David. Compare Dt. 17.15: Thou shalt surely set him king over thee, whom Jehovah thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee.—*Thou shalt feed my people Israel.* The earliest metaphor of the ruler as shepherd of his people.—*Prince.* Or, *leader,* RVm.

5.3. *Made a covenant.* Which stated, no doubt, the duties and rights of the king of a limited monarchy (1 S. 10.25) and of his subjects. See the additional statements given in 1 Ch. 12.23-40, and read Psalm 101, "a Psalm of David".

I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way:
Oh when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
I will set no base thing before mine eyes:
I hate the work of them that turn aside;
It shall not cleave unto me.
Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,
that they may dwell with me:
He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister
unto me.

Before Jehovah. A recognition of Jehovah as the Theocratic Ruler.—*They anointed David king over Israel.* "All things come round to him who will wait" (*Longfellow*).

5.4. *Thirty years old.* The age at which Jesus began his public ministry.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2.4. *They that buried Saul.* The Philistines had cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor. It was common oriental practice to strip and even to mutilate the bodies of enemies left dead on the battlefield. Beheading was a common practice. At Ninevah Layard found numerous representatives of warriors bearing away the heads of their victims as trophies, or presenting them to their kings. To be left unburied was to the Israelites, as to all ancient peoples, a terrible thought, the greatest of disgraces. Compare the number of times that Jeremiah threatens that bodies will be left unburied (Jer. 7.33; 8.12; 16.4; 22.19; 36.30). The royal bodies were first burnt by the men of Jabesh-gilead, and then their ashes were buried. Roberts speaks in this connection of the practice among the Hindus. "Two of their thirty-two charities are to burn the bodies of those whose relatives can not do it, and to pay for the beatings of tom-toms to the place of burning. It is therefore considered a work of great merit to perform the funeral rites for a respectable stranger, or for those whose relatives are not able to meet the expenses."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When and by whom was David first anointed? What did that anointing denote? (The Divine consecration to the kingship.) How and by whom was Saul made king? What wars have been fought with the Philistines since Saul became king? To whom was the glory of the Battle of Michmash due? What did Saul do for the men of Jabesh-gilead?

David at Ziklag. Realizing that after his revulsion of feeling certain to come, Saul would be more hostile than ever because of his confession and of his own (David's) magnanimous treatment, David as a last resource fled with his household and six hundred valiant men to his country's long-time enemies, the Philistines. Achish, King of Gath, welcomed him and gave him the town of Ziklag, on the edge of the desert south of Beersheba. He made raids upon the Amalekites and other desert tribes farther south, and brought the spoil to Achish as proof of his loyalty to his new master and hostility to his kinsmen, for he pretended to Achish that his raids had been made in certain districts belonging to his own tribe and its allies. From day to day valiant Israelites came to him at Ziklag, so we are told in first Chronicles, until there was a great host with him.

When the Philistines determined to make a concerted attack on the Israelites, so great was the confidence of Achish in David that he ordered him and his men to acompany him and join in the attack. David obeyed and started with Achish. We wonder what course would have been his when he reached the scene of battle, but fortunately the difficulty was solved for him by the other Philistine princes, who doubted his loyalty to their cause and compelled Achish to send him and his men back. On reaching Ziklag again it was found that the Amalekites had taken advantage of their absence and burned the town, carrying off the women and children and spoil. David pursued them. An Egyptian slave of the Philistines aided him in finding them in the desert; his attack was wholly successful; he rescued the women and children and returned with rich spoil, a portion of which he sent as gifts to the elders of Judah and their allies.

Israelites and Philistines in Battle Array. Saul's Visit to the Witch of Endor. Meanwhile the Philistines had advanced through the Plain of Esdraelon and pitched their camp by the town of Shunem, on the southern slope of the Hill of Moreh. The Israelites had encamped at the foot of Mt. Gilboa, south of the Plain, near the spot where Gideon had had his camp, before his attack on the Midianites. The night before the last batle, Saul, feeling himself deserted by Jehovah, had gone around the Philistine camp to the northern slope of the Hill of Moreh, to consult the witch at Endor. He

besought her to summon Samuel from the dead. She claimed to do this, and Saul believed that the voice he heard was that of the prophet. The voice said that Jehovah had departed from Saul, that the battle on the morrow would go against him, and that he and his sons would perish. Utterly disheartened, the king returned to await a hopeless conflict.

Result of the Battle and Death of Saul and Jonathan. On the morrow the Philistines made their charge, and drove the Israelites up the slopes of Gilboa, and utterly routed them. Brave, noble-hearted Jonathan and his two brothers were among the multitude slain. Seeing himself the mark at which the Philistine archers were aiming their arrows, Saul's soul revolted at the horrible thought of falling wounded into their hands, and he besought his armor-bearer to thrust him through with his sword. The armor-bearer refused his wish; when he saw Saul fall upon his own sword, he did the same, and perished with his king. Combining with this acount that of the next chapter in 2 Samuel, we suppose that Saul was leaning heavily on his sword, seemingly dead to the eyes of the terrified armor-bearer, when an Amalekite, in search of spoil, came up and had no scruples in carrying out Saul's expressed wish.

The Royal Bodies Impaled; Rescued by the Men of Jabesh-Gilead. Darkness fell on the battle-field. On the morrow the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. Exultantly they cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor, and carried the bodies of the king and the princes to Bethshan and fastened them upon the walls. Saul's armor was finally deposited in their heathen temple, after it had been sent with Saul's head around to the Philistine cities to proclaim the news of his death, of the defeat of the Israelites, and also of the latter's flight from the near-by cities.

When the men of Jabesh-gilead heard what had been done to the bodies of Saul and his sons, they showed their devotion by crossing the Jordan at night and rescuing them from the walls of Bethshan. Returning to Jabesh, they buried them under a conspicuous tamarisk tree with all fitting honor, fasting seven days according to strict custom.

> "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
> Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
> How are the mighty fallen,
> And the weapons of war perished!"

David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan. Two days after his return to Ziklag from his pursuit of the marauders, news of the battle of Gilboa reached David through an Amelekite who had been on the battle-field. He brought David Saul's crown and bracelets, told him that he found the king leaning on his spear and at the king's entreaty killed him. Instead of the expected reward, he received death at David's hands for having killed the Lord's anointed. In memory of Saul and Jonathan, David composed a song of lamentation which afterwards became known as the "Song of the Bow," for the record says that David "bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow." Forgetful of his personal wrongs, David eulogized the king and his son, in beautiful words which bear the ring of sincerest sorrow and affection.

His lament was also politic, for it showed him to the Israelites, not as the enemy but as a member of the house of Saul, and it must have won for him the loyalty of many friends of the royal house. He made no effort to seize the kingdom by force, but was content to wait, as he long had waited, till it should rightfully fall to him.

David's Return to Judah. The death of Saul made it safe for David to return again to his own country. After asking and receiving divine direction, he went northward with all his household and all his men and settled in Hebron. Hither came the men of Judah and anointed him king over their tribe. They told David, among other things, how the men of Jabesh-gilead had rescued Saul's body and given it burial. Grateful to them for this kindness, and wishing also to win their good will, David sent messengers through whom he thanked them for their good deed and promised to reward them. He urged them to show themselves strong and valiant men in this crisis in national affairs, and reminded them that Saul their lord was dead and he had been

anointed king over the tribe of Judah. The effect of this message we are not told, but the men of Jabesh, like all the other northern tribesmen, united their fortunes with those of Ish-bosheth, Saul's fourth son whom Abner, the captain of the army, had taken across the Jordan and proclaimed king at Mahanaim.

The Dual Kingdom. For seven years and a half there was a dual kingdom in Israel, and there were continued feuds between the rival generals, Abner on the north and Joab on the south, though we have the record of only one battle. David seems to have kept out of the contests. His power continually increased, while that of Ish-bosheth, who seems to have been only a tool in the hands of Abner, decreased. Whether from selfish motives, because he saw that Ish-bosheth's star was waning, or because he resented the suspicion of Ish-bosheth that he was seeking the throne in claiming for himself the widowed Rizpah, one of Saul's wives, Abner made overtures to David to make him king of the northern tribes. David demanded as proof of his loyalty that his former wife Michal, Saul's daughter, should be returned to him, for as the son-in-law of Saul he would be heir to Saul's throne. Abner seems to have compelled Ish-bosheth to bring this about. Abner visited Hebron and, after being hospitably entertained, departed. Joab, David's powerful general who had long vowed vengeance against Abner because he had slain his brother Asahel, caused him to return by a false message, and then treacherously slew him. David mourned his death. Ish-bosheth could not long maintain his kingdom without Abner. The disaffection grew until suddenly in the stillness of an eastern noontime two of his captains entered his room and stabbed their king as he slumbered. In great haste they carried his head to David as a welcome present, and met the same fate that he meted out to the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul.

David Made King over all Israel. Then all the other tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and anointed him their king. Three reasons they gave for doing this; they were his kinsmen, while Saul was their king David had been their military leader, and the Lord had said that David should shepherd the people of Israel. A solemn covenant was entered into between David and these elders. David was thirty years old when made king of Judah, over whom he reigned seven and a half years, and then yet thirty-three years longer he reigned over all Israel and Judah. And David went on and grew great, and the Lord of Hosts was with him.

David reigned about 1000 B. C. Remember that Abraham lived about 2000 B. C., and that the Crusades took place about as many years after Christ as David lived before Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Saul and Jonathan made their last stand against the Philistine army on Mount Gilboa. Bethshan, upon whose town walls the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened, was a Philistine city three miles west of the Jordan, between Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh. Jabesh-gilead was in Gilead across the Jordan, on an isolated, round-topped hill, in full view of Bethshan, if the identification of the site is correct.

From Ziklag, the town south of Beersheba given to him by the King of Gath, David "went up" to Hebron, fifteen miles south of Bethlehem, three thousand feet above sea level. Hebron was the chief city of the tribe of Judah, and therefore a fitting capital. It is one of the oldest towns in the world, famous in Bible history as the home of Abraham, and the place where Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob were buried. It was assigned to Caleb as a reward for his faithfulness, and it was one of the cities of refuge. Today it is called by the Arabs El-Khalil, the Friend, for "The City of the Friend of God", Abraham. (Assign ¶ 135, p. 24 and ¶119, p. 20, of "In the Master's Country".)

Ishbosheth had his capital meanwhile, as King of the other tribes of Israel, at Mahanaim, east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

There has been a great battle between the Israelites and the Philistines, and the Philistines have won. Saul, the King, and all his sons save one are killed. Who now shall be king over the Israelites? Ten years before this David was a shepherd lad at Bethlehem. One day the prophet Samuel came to his home while David was off with his sheep. What did Samuel ask Jesse, David's father? How many boys did Jesse bring before Samuel? Not one of them was the one Samuel wanted—they were tall and good-looking but Samuel knew that God had not chosen them. He said: Man looketh—what is the rest of that Golden Text of ours? Then Jesse sent for David, his youngest son. When he came Samuel knew that this was the one whom God had chosen. What did Samuel do to David? So way back then, when David was a boy, God chose him to be King sometime in place of Saul. Saul knew this, and what did he try to do to David? Who was David's great friend at this time? How did Jonathan let David know what Saul (Jonathan's father), was trying to do to David? David had to flee from Saul. He lived in a cave in the wilderness for a time. When he had a chance to kill Saul what did he do? How did he let Saul and Abner know that he had spared the King's life?

Now Saul is dead, and the news has been brought to David. He knows that God chose him long ago to be King, but he waits to learn God's will for him now. That was always David's way, he wanted to do just what God would have him do. "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" he asks. And God says, "Go". "To what city shall I go?" And God tells him to go to Hebron. Don't you think that David must have been very glad to start back to the country which he had left so long ago?

Describe the journey—the many men and women and children—the men carrying spears and clubs—all the little children riding on mules or donkeys or camels—David's family were all riding—and how they had to go over a very rough country, up hill and down hill. Then they came to land that had been cultivated, where there were apricot trees and fig trees, and olive trees, and many pleasant villages. At last they reached Hebron, which was the chief city of the tribe of Judah. Abraham had lived there many, many years before. There the men of Judah made David their King.

Tell your pupils how David grieved over the death of Jonathan and how he praised Saul and Jonathan in a beautiful song: what the men of Jabesh-gilead did, and how David rewarded them. David was friendly with every one, and he was grateful for every kindness shown him or his friends. Talk about showing others that you are grateful when they have done you a kindness.

For seven and a half years Saul's son Ish-bosheth was king over the northern tribes. David might have gone to battle and made himself king over those tribes, too, but he was content to wait God's own time. Ish-bosheth died. and the time came for David to be King, not only over the tribe of Judah but over all the people of Israel. Show Tissot's picture No. 127, David made King over Judah and Israel. Describe Jerusalem, the city which David made his capital.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Last week we saw how David was willing to abide God's time. Today we see how God rewarded him. Saul stood between him and the throne. When he had an opportunity to put Saul out of the way, what noble quality did David show? How only did he say Saul should meet his death as far as he, David, was concerned? How did Saul perish?

For Older Pupils. See the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Tact

David a Man of Tact. Our word *tact* comes from the Latin *tangere, tactum,* a verb meaning *to touch.* It refers sometimes to a physical faculty, the sense of touch, but more often to a mental faculty, the sensitive mental touch. Webster defines tact as "peculiar skill or faculty; a nice perception or

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discernment; a ready power of appreciating and doing what is required by circumstances." The right deed that is done at the right time and in the right way is a tactful deed. It is not easy to define tact in a few words but it is easy to illustrate it. In a story about Irish life Miss Barlow has a capital illustration. She is telling about an old woman who has seen better days and is very proud but who is so poor that she has not enough to eat. Two of her neighbors wish to help her. One brings her some potatoes with the remark that she can not well afford to spare them, but she can not see her neighbor want. The other comes in and borrows a dish and as she thanks her for the favor asks her to try some of her new potatoes. Whose gift do you think the poor woman accepted?

Of all the Old Testament characters from Genesis to Samuel, the most tactful one is David. When the women praised him so as to arouse the king's jealousy, the court would naturally be opposed to him, too, but he behaved himself so wisely that he won the devoted love of Jonathan, the prince, and of all the people. When he was made a captain over the warriors, his popularity increased. When he was hunted from place to place as an outlaw, the disaffected men of the kingdom joined him, and these brave but turbulent companions he kept in check and won their loyal devotion. All who came near him seem to have felt the charm of his personality, and this could only mean that he possessed the "peculiar skill or faculty" called tact in dealing with men.

It is true that deceit often marked his dealings with others, especially in his connection with Achish the king of Gath. Friends and enemies alike he deceived and he made use of falsehood when he thought it would serve him. This was not tact, it was lying, but in our judgment of this sin of his we must not fail to remember that he lived in an age when lying was considered justifiable, even necessary, and a skilful liar lost not in others' esteem.

As we choose to look at it, David's message to the men of Jabesh-gilead may be regarded as a selfish bid for power, or as a genuinely sincere appreciation of their devoted deed, and a tactful presentation of the situation. But surely no one can read his magnificent ode on the death of Saul and Jonathan without being convinced of the depth of David's feeling for them. His love for Jonathan no one can doubt; doubtless he mourned Jonathan's death far more than that of Saul, but he seemed to have forgotten his own wrongs and to have thought of Saul as he once deserved to be thought of. He keenly appreciated the deed of the Jabeshites, and he honestly desired to requite this kindness. It was kind and tactful to tell them so. Tact is largely a matter of thoughtfulness, and this David possessed in a great degree. He was ever on the alert to requite a kindness, whether to Mephibosheth for his father Jonathan's sake, or to Chimham for Barzillai, his father's sake, or to the Jabeshites for Saul's and Jonathan's sakes. He did the right thing in the right way at the right time.

Tactless People. "Sayin' de right thing at de right time am a great gif, but not sayin' anything at de right time am moz ez good an er heap mo' reli'ble," a colored philosopher is reported to have said. One who is thoughtful of others' feelings, will have fewer tactless words to regret than the one who says what he thinks without consideration of the one to whom he says them.

Sincerity the Soul of Tact. "I grease the wheels of life with money," says a wealthy man, "and my wife does it with politeness. She gets along with far less friction that I do, however." There are natures so gracious that the patience and kindliness of good-breeding seem theirs by inheritance. What is tact but skill in discerning what will be agreeable and helpful to somebody else? It includes kindliness, and then it is one of the elements of the highest breeding, and an ornament to any character. Christianity includes many pagan virtues, but tact is the flower of them all. A good deed without a proper method may do great harm. Great causes suffer more from tactless enthusiasts than from virulent enemies. Sincerity is the soul of spiritual tact. This, with kindliness, will enable a person to move the little world around him to beautiful and gracious ends. Consider what other people care for. Study their histories. Remember their little things. Prove that you remember them by your words and deeds. *The Youth's Companion.*

A Beautiful Instance of Tact. I went to Music Hall about eight, and

saw an audience of quite two thousand people—the place jammed, and two hundred and fifty clergymen and bishops on the platform. Cold shudders ran down my back. However, I knew my subject, or thought I did, and I was going to speak without notes—something I have never done since. My turn came after Father Benson, of Oxford. The whole place looked black to me; I got up, stammered and sputtered for five or six minutes—my time was twenty-five minutes—and sat down. I am not exaggerating this; I did not say one clear sentence that would parse in that time. I sat down in darkness and the meeting went on. At last people began to go, then men began to leave the platform; I did not know a soul. I sat there utterly cast down—a lonely youth indeed. All at once a large hand was laid on my shoulder, and a big, kind voice said: "Mr. Rainsford, will you preach for me in Trinity Church next Sunday morning?" That was my first meeting with Phillips Brooks. Was it any wonder I loved him? *W. S. Rainsford* in *A Preacher's Story of his Work.*

II Good Citizenship

David's Message. David's message to the citizens of Jabesh-gilead is a most interesting one. "Now, therefore, let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant," he said: "therefore," because "Saul your lord is dead and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them." In this natural crisis he reminds them of their duties as citizens. Saul is dead, who shall be their ruler? He would willingly be their king as well as the king of the tribe of Judah, he plainly tells them, but he has no intention of accomplishing this object by force, it is for them to decide. "Let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant" in this dark hour when your enemies, the Philistines, have made themselves masters of Central Canaan. Upon you the responsibility rests.

Of course you have often heard the expression "You are a brick," do you know how it came into use? "Every man a brick" is a very old phrase. Plutarch tells us that an ambassador from Epirus was being shown by the king of Sparta over his capital and was much surprised to find no massive walls encircling the city. "Sire," he said, "I find no walls reared for the defense of your capital. How is this?" "Sir Ambassador, thou canst not have looked carefully," replied the king. "Come with me tomorrow morning, and I will show you the walls of Sparta." The next morning the king led the ambassador out upon the plain where his army was drawn up in full battle array, and, pointing proudly to the men, he said: "There thou beholdest the walls of Sparta—ten thousand men, and every man a brick!" David asked the men of Jabesh to let their hands be strong and to be valiant, to prove themselves the "bricks" of the Israelite Kingdom.

The Qualities of Good Citizens. I plead with you for all that makes strong citizens. First, clear convictions, deep, careful, patient study of the government under which we live, until you not merely believe it to be the best in all the world, but know why you believe. And then a clear conscience, as clear as in private interests, as much ashamed of public as of private sin, as ready to hate, rebuke, and vote down corruption in the State, in your own party, as you would be in your own store or church; as ready to bring the one as the other to the judgment of a living God. And then unselfishness—an earnest and exalted sense that you are for the land, and not alone the land for you. And then activity—the readiness to wake and watch and do a citizen's work untiringly, counting it as base not to vote at an election, not to work against a bad official or not to work for a good one, as it would have been to shirk a battle in war. Such strong citizenship let there be among us, such knightly doing of our duties on the field of peace. *Phillips Brooks.*

A Christian's Duty. The love of one's country, obedience to its laws, support of its institutions, and promotion of its welfare belong to every one who loves God and his fellow men. Among all the sciences there is none more important than the science of government, which has to do with the peace, prosperity and safety of the nation. Political parties are to patriotism as sects are to religion, and sometimes the best civic policy has been sacrificed because of a party's traditions. Above all political parties is the brotherhood of man and, in all political matters, I am bound to stand first for my brother's

good, and so politics belongs in the sphere of ethics. In nothing that has to do with human life can we get away from morality and religion. Business standards, popular amusements and civic improvements touch all citizens. I am part of both the community and the nation. Patriotism and religion are flowers on one stalk whose roots reach down into the love of God and men. *Peter Ainslie,* in *My Brother and I.*

III Earning the Kingdom

What David's Call to the Kingship meant for him. We have seen David anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel, and then we have seen him very far from the throne, an exile, living in caves or living with Israel's enemies, his life ever in danger. What could that anointing by Samuel have meant? If he was called by God to be king, why was the road he had to travel so indirect? David was, to start with, a man after God's own heart, brave and wise and strong of faith, but in the ten years since that first consecration he had learned yet greater humility and patience, trust in God and love for men, even an enemy, justice and unselfishness and self-control. Bishop F. I. McConnell writing in the Sunday-School Journal, puts the situation very clearly:

The consciousness that he was chosen of the Lord for the Kingdom was no doubt a controlling factor in David's thought. The lesson is important as showing us how we must understand the Lord's guidance of David to the throne. From the standpoint of the sacred writers the anointing at the hands of Samuel did not mean that David was to be carried forthwith to power by a sort of irresistible decree. The decree was indeed given to David, but David had to enforce it. We are not to think of the choice of David by the Lord as some mighty force which was bound to put David on the throne whether David did much or little. The narrator would have us understand that David was to gain the kingship if he did much and not little. So there were the hardships in the wilderness, the life which threw David back upon stern realities after at least a taste of the luxuries of the court. The wild and rough hardship of those outlaw days was a necessary part in training David for the unification of Israel. The conscioueness of high destiny served to call forth from David a mightier energy than he would otherwise have known. The Lord's calls are usually like the call of David. They are really calls, that is to say, they are cries of beckoning from far in advance. The one who is called is singled out as of sufficient hardihood to traverse the distance to the One calling.

My Heart Hath Trusted in Him, and I am Helped. Throughout his life, David saw God's providence. The first thing he did after virtually acquiring a royal position was to ask counsel of God. His royal administration was begun by prayer. And there was a singular appropriateness in this act. For the great characteristic of David brought out especially in his Psalms, is the reality and nearness of his fellowship with God. We may find other men who equalled him in every other feature of character, but we shall find no one to whom God was so much of a personal Friend, so blended, we may say, with his very existence. David is therefore eminently himself when asking counsel of the Lord. And would not all do well to follow him in this? The great matter is to resemble David in his profound sense of the infinite value and reality of Divine direction. Without this your prayers will always be more or less matters of formality. Is it really a profound conviction of yours that in every step of your life God's direction is of supreme value? That you dare not even change your residence with safety without being directed by him? That you dare not enter on new relations in life—new business, new connections, new recreations—without seeking the divine countenance? *Dr. W. S. Blaikie,* in *Expositor's Bible.*

A World-Winning Spirit. I see Adoniram Judson, the Apostle of the Burmese. I see him there, in Burma after years of patient and apparently perfectly fruitless toil. He is asked by those at home, "What are the prospects there in Burma?" and he sits down in his house and he calmly writes home, "The prospects here in Burma are just as bright as the promises of God." These promises have been fulfilled in Burma since, but I see that calm, cool American spirit waiting in perfect confidence, when there was no sign of the

harvest and only the toil of the sowing. There is a strength in the young manhood of America, there is an activity and an alacrity, there is a consecration, there is a patience, which may win the world for Christ. And we here at home, who are in England, must rejoice in this, that these American people are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. *Dr. Robert F. Horton,* in a *Sermon* at *Hempstead, England.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Are you thoughtful about doing the right thing in the right way? Are you wise and tactful in your dealings with others?

> Oh, the little more and how much it is,
> And the little less, and what worlds away!

exclaims Browning. The lack of thoughtful consideration of others, the failure to put oneself in another's place, is the "little less" that takes from a good deed and renders it "worlds away" from what it might have been.

Our Prayer: May we not be ungrateful, O our Father, for the kindnesses shown to us, failing neither in the expression of our gratitude nor in the readiness to return a kindness. Make us grateful, too, for the kindnesses shown to our friends, and ever thoughtful and careful to say and to do the right things in the right way. May we not be blind to our duties to our city and country, unheedful of the responsibilities that rest upon us in maintaining justice and righteousness in the land. To thee we look for guidance in national as in individual interests. Turn the thoughts of all towards righteousness, and direct their feet in the way thou wouldst have them walk.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The history covered by each of the Books of Samuel.
2. David's "In Memoriam," the "Song of the Bow."
3. The two generals, Joab and Abner, and their relation to the two Kings.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What became of the Philistines? (*Guide,* p. 237.) 2. What conquests did David make? (*Guide,* p. 237.) 3. Tell the story of what was done with the ark when Jericho was taken. (Joshua 6.) 4. On what former occasion had the ark been put on a new cart? (1 S. 6.7-16.) 5. When was the ark at Kiriath-Jearim? (1 S. 6.19-7.2.) 6. What were the directions for moving the ark as given in Num. 4.5, 15? 7. What does Dt. 10.5 say that the ark contained? 8. Why was the ark in the home of Obed-edom? (Verses 1-11.) 9. Read the account of the removal of the ark given in 1 Ch. chapters 13, 15 and 16. 10. How was dancing regarded by the ancients? (*Guide,* p. 236.) 11. What is the title of the twenty-fourth Psalm? 12. How is the Psalm to be interpreted? (*Guide,* pp. 238, 239.) 13. What is the meaning of "Selah"? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 236.) 14. In Ps. 24.7-10 who are the speakers? (*Guide,* p. 236.) 15. What does Luke 4.16 say concerning Jesus' habit of attending the house of the Lord? 16. What does Mt. 21.15, 16 show about Jesus liking to see and hear the children at the church services?

Questions to think about. 1. Why did David offer sacrifices after the procession had advanced only six paces? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 234.) 2. Into what two parts does Psalm Twenty-four divide? 3. What is meant by "the fulness thereof", Psalm 24.1? 4. What is meant by "he that hath clean hands and a pure heart"? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 235.) 5. What needs are met by the church? 6. What would happen to your city if all the churches were closed? 7. Why do you go to church? 8. Why should a Christian be joyful?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory a portion of David's Psalm of Thanksgiving in First Chronicles 16. In your life of David, write **Part VII, David as King.**

LESSON IX—MAY 30

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

Golden Text

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of Jehovah. Psalm 122.1

LESSON II Samuel 6.1-19, Psalm 24: II Samuel 6.12-15, Psalm 24 printed
MEMORIZE Psalm 24.7-10

2 S. 6. 12 And it was told king David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy. 13 And it was so, that, when they that bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14 And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

Ps. 24. 1 The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
3 Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah.
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, *even* Jacob.
[Selah.
7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
8 Who is the King of glory?
Jehovah, strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
10 Who is this King of glory?
Jehovah of hosts,
He is the king of glory. [Selah

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

2 Samuel 6.12. *Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, because of the ark of God.* Read verses 1-11. To the Israelites the Ark was symbolical of Divine presence, the visible form of an invisible Power. Joseph Parker suggests that as long as we have the Bible we have the ark of the Covenant, for law is in it, and mercy: it blesses the house as the house of Obed-edom was blessed when he received the ark of the Lord into his dwelling.—*David went and brought up the ark of God.* Compare the account in 1 Ch. 15 and 16. —*With joy.* With shouting, and with sound of cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps. 1 Ch. 15.28.

6.13. *They that bare the ark.* The requirements of the law were fulfilled this time and the ark was in charge of the Levites: compare the method of procedure on the former occasion, verses 1-11. They were going up to Jerusalem, along a steep, winding ascent, and it was probably easier to carry the ark on their shoulders than to have it brought upon a cart: moreover, the fate of Uzzah was still in their minds.—*When they had gone six paces.* And as nothing had happened they were confident that they could safely bring it into the city, "Jehovah was helping the Levites that bare the ark", 1 Ch. 15.26.—*He sacrificed an ox and a fatling.* The fatling was any fatted animal. The sacrifice was evidently a thank offering, that God was giving his sanction to the enterprise.

6.14. *David danced with all his might.* He was leaping and dancing, verse 16. "The word translated danced seems to mean whirled, as in the devotional dancing of the dervishes" (*Smith*). Women were the usual dancers on such occasions of public rejoicing: see p. 236. It was David's enthusiasm that led him to take part himself in the rejoicing.—*Before Jehovah.* Before the Ark which symbolized the presence of Jehovah.—*With all his might.* His joy was intense.—*David was girded with a linen ephod.* For *ephod* see ¶ 2, p. 152. The linen ephod was the dress of the priest, and David was taking the part of the priest in leading the procession, arranging the sacrifice, and blessing the people (verse 18). Over the linen ephod he wore a robe of fine linen, 1 Ch. 15.27, which he threw off in the course of his dancing.

6.15. *With shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.* On the occasion of the completion of Solomon's temple and the bringing in of the Ark, the Levites who were the singers, and their sons and their brethren, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding the trumpets; it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; and they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised Jehovah, saying, For he is good; for his loving kindness endureth for ever, 2 Ch. 5.12, 13.

Procession of Musicians and Clappers

2. S. 6.16-23. In these verses are recorded the placing of the Ark in the tent, the offerings offered by David, the blessing and feasting of the people and Michal's taunting David for his dancing.

Ps. 24.1. See the Historical Background.—*The fulness thereof.* All that fills it. "I give thee thanks, O Lord and Creator, that thou hast gladdened me by thy creation, when I was enraptured by the work of thy hands" (*Kepler*). See Dr. Watkinson's words, p. 242.

Ps. 24.2. *For he hath founded it.* The emphasis is upon *he.* The single act of creation passes over, as usual in the Old Testament, into the habitual act of God's sustaining providence" (*Briggs*).—*Upon the seas . . upon the floods.* The ancient conception of waters under the earth is here embodied: see Gen. 1.7; Ex. 20.4, and compare Job 26.7 where God is said to have stretched out the north over empty space, and hung the earth upon nothing.

Ps. 24.3. *Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?* What sort of person is worthy to approach him who is the Creator and Lord of all the earth? The hill of Jehovah is here the temple hill.—*Who shall stand in his holy place?* Who shall be permitted to enter the place consecrated to his worship. Compare Ps. 15.1.

Ps. 24.4. *He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.* A man wholly guiltless of sin. He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, Ps. 15.2. "God

can see the stains on hands and hearts (conscience) of a criminal" (*Cheyne*). —*Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood.* Speaketh truth in his heart, Ps. 15.2.—*And hath not sworn deceitfully.* He that slandereth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his friend, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor, 15.3.

Ps. 24.6. *This is the generation of them that seek after him.* These are the men who desire to know God.—*Even Jacob.* Even the true Israelite.—*Selah.* This word occurs seventy-one times in the Psalms, but it is of uncertain meaning. In the Septuagint Version it is translated "Interlude", and the thought must be that it is a direction to the musicians. Jewish tradition declares that it means "for ever". Dr. Briggs suggests that the Septuagint and the Jewish explanations are really two aspects of the same thing: the former (interlude) denoting the point where the benediction might be sung and the Psalm concluded for that service; while the latter (for ever) gives the last word of the benediction, which would indicate the same thing." Another explanation is that the word means "repeat": in a Jewish service today any one in the congregation may call out "Selah", and the last part must be repeated. Another suggestion is that "Selah" may indicate "reverential prostration". An article on "the temple and temple-service" in the Encyclopædia Biblica says that the choir of Levites to the accompaniment of instrumental music, sang the Psalm of the day, which was divided into three sections: at the close of each section a body of priests blew three blasts on the silver trumpets and the people prostrated themselves in worship. Selah, it is thought, indicates the place for this prostration during the singing of the Psalm.—*Everlasting.* Or, *Ancient, RVm.*

Ps. 24.7. The choir without now speaks. See ¶ 2, p. 239. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates.* The gates are personified, addressed as persons, and bade stretch themselves upward to make a more spacious entrance. "A new king is about to enter the ancient and venerable city, and indeed the highest and mightiest king conceivable, Jehovah himself, enthroned upon the Ark of the Covenant. Such a king has never entered this city, and the gray gates, although venerable with age, are too small and mean for him" (*Ewald*)—*Ye everlasting doors.* "Everlasting, because typifying hearts and heavens, alike eternal, which shall open to receive the Savior" (*Wood*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *David danced before Jehovah with all his might.* Egyptian men sometimes danced with great spirit, bounding from the ground more in the manner of Europeans than of the Eastern people. It was not customary for the

Egyptian Dancers

upper orders of Egyptians to indulge in this amusement, either in public or private assemblies, and none appear to have practiced it but the lower ranks of society, and those who gained their livelihood by attending festive meetings. The Greeks, however, though they employed women who professed music and dancing, to entertain the guests, looked upon the dance as a recreation in which all classes might indulge, and an accomplishment becoming a gentle man. The Romans, on the contrary, were far from considering it worthy of a man of rank, or of a sensible person; and Cicero says: "No man who is sober dances, unless he is out of his mind, either when alone or in any decent society."

Of all the Greeks, the Ionians were most noted for their fondness of this art, moderate dancing was even deemed worthy of the gods themselves. Jupiter, "the father of gods and men", is represented dancing in the midst of the

othed deities; and Apollo is not only introduced by Homer as thus engaged, but received the title of "The Dancer", from his supposed excellence in the art.

The Egyptians also danced at the temples in honor of the gods, and in some processions, as they approached the precincts of the sacred courts. *Condensed from History of Nations, by Wilkinson.*

Dancing grew out of an innate predisposition, and even need, in the man of primitive society to express emotion, or accomplish purpose in regulated bodily movements. It must have been communal man who began it, because, until there was such a thing, a thought or need of synchronous movement was not likely to arise. At the bottom of synchronous movement lies sympathy, and sympathy pre-supposes plurality. It is in harmony with this impulse, that in the earliest stages of civilization the world over the dance became religious. That is its status amongst the civilized peoples of antiquity when we first read of them, and that is its status among the savages and semi-civilized peoples of today.

Even after the introduction of Christianity, dancing continued for centuries to be an element of religious worship among those who had espoused the new religion, as it had been a feature of the Greek mysteries and the Egyptian and Hebrew festivals. In some of the ancient churches of Rome there is still to be seen a raised floor at which first at festivals but eventually every Sunday the priests performed their dances, led by the Bishop, who as leader of the dance was called "Praesul." In France, the custom of dancing in the churches endured till its legal prohibition in 1667; it still survives as an annual ceremony at the cathedral in Seville. *H. C. Krehbiel, in N. Y. Tribune.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In this lesson we see the Lord as King: in what aspect did we see him in an earlier Psalm? In the lesson about David and Goliath, in whose name did David say he came? (Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.) What have we heard about the Ark being taken into battle? (Lesson VIII of First Quarter.)

David and the Philistines. Before the ark could be brought to Jerusalem David must have been firmly settled on his throne. It is impossible to determine the chronological order of the events of David's reign, but certainly his defensive and offensive wars with the Philistines must have first taken place, and probably his wars of conquest as well, before there came a time of rest in which he could turn his attention to his capital and to the ark. Many scholars place the events of chapters 10, 11, 12 and 8 before those of 6, 7 and 9.

As soon as the Philistines learned that David had captured the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem, and united the northern kingdom with the southern, they became aware that David was no longer a petty chieftain whose power they need not fear, and they "went out against him". Three combats with the Philistines near Gibeon are recorded. The Philistines were so thoroughly routed that we never again hear of their troubling the Israelites.

David's Conquests. David fills a larger space in Hebrew history than any other one save only Moses and Christ. Later generations looked back to him as the model King. By conquest he extended his empire from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, making the Philistines on the west and the Edomites, Moabites, Aramæans and others east of the Jordan pay tribute to him. Even the King of Hamath on the Orontes sent him presents (2 S. 8.9-11). Towards the north David's rule extended as far as the Lebanons. On the Northwest King Hiram of Tyre concluded with David a friendly alliance. On the south was the desert.

The First Attempt to Bring the Ark to Jerusalem. In the time of Eli the ark was taken into battle and captured by the Philistines (Lesson VIII of First Quarter). The Philistines placed it first in the house of their god Dagon in Ashdod, then sent it to Gath and then to Ekron. Grievous afflictions befell the people of every city to which it was taken, and the Philistines in terror put it on a new cart and sent it to the Israelites of Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh were smitten for looking into the ark, which was contrary to the law, and they sent to the men of Kirjath-jearim to come and get it. It

was brought into the house of Abinadab, and Eleazar, his son, was sanctified to keep it.

We hear nothing further about the ark until David decided to have it brought to Jerusalem. At the head of a great procession of chosen men of Israel he went to Kiriath-jearim (Baale-judah) for it. The ark was placed on a new cart and the oxen were driven by Uzzah and Ahio, of the family of Abinadab. Joyously the procession moved along its way to Jerusalem, David exulting with the rest and keeping time to the music of harps and psalteries, timbrels and castanets and cymbals. But their joy suddenly turned to grief and fear, for when the oxen stumbled Uzzah put his hand upon the ark to steady it, and "God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God." His sudden death, whether from natural or supernatural cause, was considered by the people a vindication of the sacredness of God, and taught the duty of reverential care for the ark, the symbol of God. Angry at himself probably, for his failure to have the ark borne according to their law (Num. 4), and afraid to have it taken into Jerusalem, David had it carried aside to the house of Obed-edom. There it had remained three months, and Obed-edom and all his household had been blessed by its presence.

David as Musician. The music of ancient Israel attained its highest development during the lifetime of King David. He it was who arranged the various orders of musicians and singers for the service in the temple to be erected by his son Solomon (1 Ch. 15). There were four thousand Levites in the orchestra and choir directed by two hundred and eighty leaders. Many of the Psalms indicate that they were written for an orchestra and choir.

The Occasion of the Writing of the Twenty-fourth Psalm. Its title is: "The King of Glory entering Zion. A Psalm of David." The second part describes the entrance of Jehovah, the King of Glory, into the city, seemingly at the head of a victorious army, and it is most appropriate for this occasion, the bringing of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem.

It is interesting to recall the interpretation given this Psalm by the early Christian writers. Dr. T. K. Cheyne, in "The Christian Use of the Psalms," says that it is not unnatural that they should apply these words to that fact of faith—the ascension—when our Leader and Hero was received within the gates of the eternal temple.

The Two Parts of the Psalm. We may think of the procession chanting the didactic choral, the first part of the Psalm, verses 1-6, as they wind their way up to the city of Zion, and stopping at the venerable gates and there listening to the triumphal choral of the second part. Possibly, however, the two parts were once independent Psalms which were later united. Dr. C. A. Briggs takes this view, and assigns the questions and answers of Part 1 as well as the demand and the challenge of Part II, to two choirs, one within the gate and the other without.

Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in The Life of David, gives this realistic and sympathetic interpretation:

First there swells forth from all the singers the triumphant proclamation of God's universal sovereignty, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods." When the symbol of his presence is to have a local habitation in the center of the national life, the psalmist lays for the foundation of his song the great truth, that the divine presence is concentrated in Israel, but not confined there, and concentrated in order that it may be diffused.

Then, as they climb, a single voice perhaps chants the solemn question, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in the place of his holiness?"

And the full-toned answer portrays the men who shall dwell with God, in words which begin, indeed, with stringent demands for absolute purity, but wonderfully change in tone as they advance, into gracious assurances, and the clearest vision that the moral nature which fits for God's presence is God's gift. "The clean handed, and pure hearted, who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully;" there is the eternal law which nothing can ever alter, that to abide with God a man must be like God—the law of the new covenant

as of the old, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But this requirement, imposible of fulfilment, is not all. If it were, the climbing procession might stop. But up and up they rise, and once again the song bursts forth in deeper and more hopeful words, "He shall receive the blessings from Jehovah and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Then that righteousness, which he who honestly attempts to comply with such requirements will soon find that he does not possess, is to be received from above, not elaborated from within; is a gift of God, not a product of man's toils. God will make us pure, that we may dwell with him. The righteousness which fits for dwelling with God the last words of the answer proclaim is given on the simple condition of seeking him.

And now the procession has reached the front of the ancient city on the hill, and stands before the very walls and weather beaten gates which Melchizedek may have passed through, and which had been barred against Israel till David's might had burst them. National triumph and glad worship are wonderfully blended in the summons which rings from the lips of the Levites without; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye doors (that have been from of old)," as if even their towering portals were too low, "and the King of glory shall come in."

Then, with a wonderful dramatic force, a single voice from within the barred gates asks, like some suspicious warder, "Who, then, is the King of glory?" With what a shout of proud confidence and triumphant memories of a hundred fields comes, ready and full, the crash of many voices in answer, "Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle!" How vividly the reluctance of an antagonistic world to yield to Israel and Israel's King, is represented in the repetition of the question in a form slightly more expressive of ignorance and doubt, in answer to the reiterated summons, "Who is he, the King of glory?" With what deepened intensity of triumph there peals, hoarse and deep, the choral shout, "The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory." That name which sets him forth as sovereign of the personal and impersonal forces of the universe—angels and stars, and terrestrial creatures, all gathered in ordered ranks, embattled for his service—was a comparatively new name in Israel, and brought with it thoughts of irresistible might in earth and Heaven. It crashes like a catapult against the ancient gates; and at that proclamation of the omnipotent name of the God which dwells with men, they grate back on their brazen hinges, and the ark of the Lord enters its rest.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The ark had long rested at Kiriath-jearim, twelve miles from Jerusalem on the border between Judah and Benjamin. David brought the ark first as far as Perez-Uzzah (the breach of Uzzah) and then it was taken aside into Obed-edom's house. After three months it was brought to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, the city of David, was originally the fortress of Jebus. On the Tell-el-Amarna tablets it is called Uru-Salim, and it is therefore thought that the Israelites restored to it an ancient name. David strengthened his capital by building a new wall (1 Ch. 11.7-9), and erected for himself a palace of stone and cedar. To make it the national center of his kingdom, it must also possess a national sanctuary, and become the center of the worship of God. At this time the tabernacle was in one city, the ark in another, and both were neglected. The tabernacle had long been in Shiloh, but perhaps for a part of the time it was at Nob. The ark was at Kiriath-jearim. There were two high priests, Abiathar, the sole survivor of Saul's massacre of the priests at Nob, who had joined David when he was in the cave of Adullam; and Zadok at Shiloh, who had been with Saul and with Ish-bosheth before David was made king of all Israel. David retained both high priests, had a temporary tent prepared at Jerusalem for the reception of the ark, until he could carry out his cherished purpose of erecting a temple for its abode, and then summoned the people for a great religious procession to bring the ark up to the capital.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

David's dancing was the expression of his zeal and joy and enthusiasm upon that great occasion when the sacred ark was being brought to the capital. David

was whole-hearted in all that he did, he threw his whole soul into every undertaking. Is there anyone who more than a Sunday-school teacher needs these same qualities—whole-hearted zeal for his work, enthusiasm for his theme, and joy in teaching? You can't make the most of your opportunity with your class if you are not throwing your whole soul into it; you can't arouse your pupils to a realization of their obligation to the Lord if you are not yourself alive to these obligations; you cannot serve humanity well if you don't get any joy out of your service.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Draw a picture of the ark upon your board, and explain that it held the table of commandments and was sacred to the Israelites. David wanted to have it in his new capital so that he and the people could go where it was and worship God, just as we want to have churches where we can worship. Say nothing about the first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem and the death of Uzzah. Emphasize the joy that the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem gave David. Call for the Golden Text and talk about it. Tell the story about "Tuning the Soul", p. 241. Make your pupils see the procession going up the hill to Jerusalem, the musicians and the choir, the priests and the ark, David, and the people, all rejoicing. Ask them how they feel when they hear a hurdy-gurdy on the street. Do they want to laugh and prance when they hear merry music? When the big organ is played in church, how solemn and quiet one feels! When a band marches along playing national airs, how patriotic and brave it makes everyone feel. They had strange instruments of music in those days, and the people played upon them as they marched, making David and everyone rejoice. Study Dr. Maclaren's interpretation of Psalm 24, p. 238, and adapt it to your pupils' understanding. The rhythmical beauty of the words will appeal to them, and do not try to have them grasp their full meaning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. David is now King over all Israel. What are some of the things that he will do as king? He will wage successful warfare with the enemies of his country, especially with the Philistines, and with God's help will make his people free and powerful and happy; he will be a just judge; and he will take care to have God honored and worshipped and obeyed in all his land. To the Israelites what was the symbol of God's presence? On what occasion was the Ark borne into battle and captured? (Lesson VIII, 1st Quarter.)

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I Was Glad when They Said unto Me,
Let Us Go into the House of Jehovah.

I was Glad. In the St. James Version of the Bible the title of the One Hundred and Twenty-second Psalm from which our Golden Text is taken is "David professeth joy for the church, and prayeth for the peace thereof." That David did rejoice in the religious services we have abundant evidence. How he missed them while in exile! In the Psalm entitled "Thirsting for God in Trouble and Exile" we read:

> My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God!
> When shall I come and appear before God?
> These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,
> How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
> With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.

This great One Hundred and Twenty-second Psalm is not a plea for public worship, Dr. J. E. McFadyen reminds us in "The Messages of the Psalms", and then explains:—To the men who sang it no such plea was needed; the necessity for such a plea has been left to times like ours. Worship should not be so much a duty as a joy.

The city in which we worship is seldom fragrant with historic and religious memories; the church in which we gather is not the single rallying point of the body of believers whose hope and faith we share. Our worship is not particularly associated with national or patriotic feelings. It has not that splendid concentration of religious, patriotic and historical interest which it had for the ancient Jew. But that only makes our task the harder. Our need is as imperative, and our joy should be as deep.

The heart which does not throb in response to the quaintly simple expression of the Psalmist's joy in worship has yet to learn the deepest things in religion.

Why Go Gladly to Church? "Why don't you go to church?" is a question often answered by another, "Why should I?" Here are three reasons given by a business man in response to the editor of a magazine:—

1. Because of what the Church stands for; with all of its human imperfections, the Church stands for the best elements in life and the highest conception of God to man.

2. Because of its offerings. Nearly all the institutions and agencies for the uplift of humanity are the products, directly or indirectly, of the Christian religion. Most of the people who give their time, talents, and money to the support of these beneficent institutions are members of or results of the Church. I want to have a part in this general uplift.

3. Because of its enemies. If a man be judged by its enemies, why not the Church? The foes of the home, marriage, and righteousness are the foes of the Church. All the forces which seek the destruction of mankind vilify the Church.

Tuning the Soul. "Why should I go to Church?" a young girl asked her grandfather.

The grandfather was silent a moment, and then he said: "Tell me, child, has the piano-tuner been here yet? you said that the piano needed tuning."

"No, I am still waiting for him, the piano needs tuning sadly. I tried to play last evening, but my playing was a dismal failure."

"Now see, my child, our souls are like a musical instrument," then said the grandfather. "The strings become slack and out of tune very quickly, they must be tuned up from time to time."

"What do you mean, Grandfather?"

"All strings—goodness, faith, courage, generosity, reverence. love—all grow less vibrant in us, without our knowing it even. But when we hear the Gospel proclaimed at church we see how we have lost tune. We are tuned up once more to what is the true pitch of righteousness. But the tuning does not last. And so one must go regularly to church to have one's soul tuned aright."

II Religion Should Be Joyous

Live on the Bright Side of Religion. A while ago we heard a Christian man complain that he was "living on the north-east side of his religion." We all know that starved, bleak, desolate aspect. Many live on that side. It is of no avail to require from them a song, they do little singing, their harps are mostly on the willows. If you inquire about their faith and hope, they tearfully respond, "I shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy." Ask about the sanctuary, and they forthwith bewail the poverty of the pulpit. Ask for their co-operation in the interests of Christ's Church, and they whine or snarl a denial. Ask them to support some gracious enterprise and they turn upon you, "I am always giving." But how delightful to live on the bright side of our religion! They sing there gaily. They bear radiant testimonials. Most gladly do their feet stand within the gates of Zion. They find the word of God sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. It is their chief joy to render service to God's cause. And if you solicit a subscription they wonder that you did not call before, and hope that you will call soon again. South, due South. Get to the south of your faith—the sunny side, the side of the palm-tree, of the bird music, of the green pasture, of the blushing cluster, of the soft blue heavens, in other words, get close to the Saviour, and your joy shall overflow. *Dr. W. E. Watkinkinson, in Studies in Life and Experience.*

Be Happy. In Iceland, instead of greeting one another with "Good morning", or "How do you do?" as they meet, each says to the other with smil-

ing countenance, "Be Happy." That is a message so much needed that I wish it were the custom here in America.

"Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore . ." we read in the Book of Deuteronomy. The Psalms are full of expressions of the joy of religion. "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," said Jesus. Paul in his list of fruits which show forth the indwelling of the Spirit places joy second, next only to love.

Bishop Fowler tells us that a preacher, approaching his new appointment, asked a boy, "Do people at Millbrook enjoy religion?" and received in reply, "Them that has it does."

When a friend asked Hayden why his church music was always so animated and cheerful he replied: "I cannot make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God my heart is so full of joy that notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen."

III Divine Sovereignty

The Marvelous Recognition. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." The universality of God's proprietorship and sovereignty is uniformly maintained by revelation. He is Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, and yet he is the God of all the earth. He has not a limited dominion like the heathen deities. He is not a local tribal God, but his sovereignty embraces the world and its fullness. It is marvelous how the poets and prophets of this little people in a corner of the earth transcended all national restrictions, and recognized in the living God whom they worshipped the Lord of the earth and sky. Whilst the great nations around restricted their conception of God within patriotic limits, this insignificant people broke away from every narrowing thought, and saw in him whom they knew as the holy One of Israel the supreme Ruler of all the worlds, nations, and ages. *Dr. W. E. Watkinson,* in *The Supreme Conquest.*

What follows from the Sovereignty of God. Four scientific men, who were exploring in the Muir glacier in Alaska, had for their guide an Indian whom they knew simply as Jake. He was a faithful and honest fellow, whose English was sufficient for the small demands they made upon it.

Sunday came. The explorers, who were all religious men, although, as it happened of different denominations, rested in camp. They spent the day quietly; and not caring either to preach or to be preached to, they thought it might be a suitable occupation to show some interest in Jake's spiritual condition.

Jake was not very communicative, and for some time made no answer to their questions. After a time, however, he delivered himself of a single emphatic sentence; then, after a pause, of another; then of a third, and finally of a fourth. These sentences were:

(1) "God is the Boss of us fellows; every man, all of us. (2) Us fellows have been mean to God; every man, all of us. (3) Christ died for us fellows; every man, all of us. (4) If we do right us fellows go to heaven; every man, all of us."

These utterances made a deep impression on the four men who heard them. Jake's meager instruction in the mission school, desultory as it had been, had not failed of its purpose, and Jake's quiet, sober, temperate life was in full accord with his convictions.

As the explorers talked together, they expressed some surprise at Jake's clear, positive way of stating his creed. That was what be believed—neither more nor less.

"Did you notice," asked one of the men, "that he seemed to cover the four great divisions of constructive dogmatics? 'God is the Boss of us fellows' is a perfectly good statement of the sovereignty of God. And although the other propositions leave something to be desired as to mere grammar and diction, they cover exactly the doctrines of sin, salvation and immortality. I am not sure but that out of Jake's four propositions we could construct a pretty satisfactory system of theology." *Condensed* from the *Youth's Companion.*

Christianity is a World Religion. It carries the weight of the world on its shoulders, and the horizon of the world in its eyes. It is a Good Shepherd religion, and its heart has no rest as long as a solitary sheep is out of the fold. As it goes on its way it picks up, one after another, the continents, the big ones and the litle ones, and seeks diligently for all the islands of the sea. It wants to whisper something to them. It wants to tell them God is love. *Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Our Prayer: We thank thee, Heavenly Father, that we can say with the wise of old, I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Jehovah. We thank thee for the great privilege which is ours, of hearing thy message in thy house. Give us attentive ears and glad hearts and obedient wills that we may translate thy messages into conduct and action that shall be pleasing unto thee. May we not fail to do what we can to give this privilege to those living in darkness, those without a church home, those without the means of hearing thy word. Make us joyful Christians, O our Father, Christians of a happy heart.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Nothing is more needed in the religious life of today than a revival of faith in the Church itself. Why are the majority of men and women in our land not church-goers? How can our class help to bring our indifferent church members to regular church attendance? See "Why Not?", *Outlook,* July 22, 1911.

In one church recently a list of those members seldom seen at the church services was made, and each one was reached by a call or a personal letter from some member of the Bible Class. The result was between fifty and sixty reclaimed members.

2. The child and the church. Ponder Dean Hodge's words: The simplest thing which fathers and mothers can do for the direct religious welfare of their children is to attend church on Sunday. The neglect of such attendance suggests at once to the logical mind of the child that the institutions of religion are not highly prized by their parents. The zeal and punctuality with which such parents may insist upon the apearance of the children at Sunday-school or at church count for little, in the face of this inconsistency; the meaning is that the institutions of religion are mainly good for children; or, if the mother goes to church and not the father, that they are for children and women. The boys look forward to the time when, being men like their fathers, they may stay at home as he does. See "Little Folks at Church", *Outlook,* Feb. 22, 1913.

3. Divine Sovereignty. See the Second Topic, and "The Bigness of the World," *Atlantic Monthly,* September, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What message did Nathan bring David concerning the building of the temple? 2. How did David take his words? (2 S. 7.) 3. Who were the men referred to in 11.23? (Verse 1.) 4. What order did Joab received from David concerning Uriah? 5. How long did Uriah's wife mourn for her husband? (1 S. 31.13.) 6. What was the name of Uriah's wife? 7. What does Ex. 22.1 give as the law in regard to restitution for theft? 8. What more did Nathan tell David? 9. How did David receive the rebuke?

Questions to think about. 1. What did the shooters, 11.24, shoot? 2. What is the meaning of "the sword devoureth one as well as another"? 3. Was David as guilty of the death of Uriah as he would have been had he killed him with his own hand? 4. In the interpretation of the parable who were the two men? 5. What parable did Jesus tell the chief priests and Pharisees so that "they perceived he spake of them"? 6. What qualities does Nathan show in this interview? 7. What qualities does David show? 8. Who should offer the prayer of our Golden Text?

Note-Book Work. In your life of David, write Part VIII, David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.

LESSON X—JUNE 6

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID

Golden Text

Create in me a clean heart, O God. Psalm 51.10

LESSON II Samuel 11.1-12. 7a (compare Psalm 51)
II Samuel 11.22-12.7a printed
MEMORIZE II Samuel 12.5, 6, 7a

11 22 So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for. 23 And the messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entrance of the gate. 24 And the shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall; and some of the king's servants are dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. 25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another; make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. 27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased Jehovah.

12 1 And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; 3 but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: 6 and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

11.22. *So the messenger went.* Read verses 14-21.—*And showed David all that Joab had sent him for.* The Septuagint Version adds: Even all the things concerning the war. And David was angry with Joab, and he said to the messenger, Wherefore went ye so nigh unto the city to fight?—a repetition of Joab's words, verse 20.

Egyptian Archers

11.23. *The men prevailed.* The men of Rabbah, whom the Israelites were besieging, verse 1.—*Came out unto us into the field.* The besieged made a sally upon the Israelites.—*We were upon them even unto the entrance gate.* We repulsed them and drove them back into their city.

11.24. *The shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall.* The Israelites came within the range of the archers stationed on the city walls.—*Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.* Compare David's order, verse 15, in which Joab was directed to put Uriah in the foremost of the hottest battle and desert him. David's plan succeeded, and though Uriah fell in battle he was really murdered by David's command.

11.25. *Let not the thing displease thee.* As Joab had foreseen, the mention of the death of Uriah pleased the king and he said nothing about Joab's reck-

lessness, verses 20 and 21.—*The sword devoureth one as well as another.* One who goes into battle takes his life in his hands, it is the chance of war whether a prominent man like Uriah or an unknown soldier falls.

11.26. *She made lamentation for her husband.* She observed the customary seven days of mourning: see Gen. 50.10; 1 S. 31.13.

11.27. *She became his wife.* It was not uncommon for a widow to remarry very soon after her husband's death—"the conventions were not violated."

12.1. *Jehovah sent Nathan unto David.* Several months have passed since Uriah's murder. Nathan's office at the court of King David was somewhat similar to that of a modern chaplain. In chapter VII we are told about Nathan's counsel to David concerning the building of the temple.—*And said unto him.* In a graphic way, by means of a parable, Nathan brings home to David the meanness of his sin.—*Two men.* In the interpretation of the parable they are David and Uriah.

12.2-3. Note how one detail after another is added so as to arouse the listener's sympathy for the poor man and abhorrence of the rich man's deed.—*One little ewe lamb.* In the interpretation of the parable, Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah.

12.4. *There came a traveler unto the rich man.* "The traveler was, as Bishop Patrick explains it from the Jewish writers, the evil imagination, disposition, or desire, which came into David's heart" (*Matthew Henry*).

12.5. *David's anger was greatly kindled against the man.* The man represented himself, but he knew it not: as the Philadelphia Record observes, if the people who are blind to their own faults only realized it, what a business the oculists would do!—*As Jehovah liveth.* A solemn oath.—*Worthy to die.* Hebrew, a son of death, RVm. David supposes that Nathan has brought a case to him for judgment, and this is his sentence. "If the sentence be thought too severe, it must be imputed to the present roughness of David's temper, being under guilt, and not having himself yet received mercy" (*Matthew Henry*).

12.6. *He shall restore the lamb four fold.* Four sheep for a sheep. Ex. 22.1.

12.7 *Thou art the man.* How these words must have amazed David! Thou art the rich man of the parable who has done this wrong: if he deserves to die who has taken his neighbor's lamb, what does he deserve who has taken his neighbor's wife and his neighbor's life? Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things, Rom. 2.1. "A truth told us is harder to bear than a hundred which we tell ourselves" (*Fénelon*). "Nathan's sword was within an inch of David's conscience before David knew that Nathan had a sword. One sudden thrust and the king was at Nathan's feet" (*Whyte*). "In beginning with the parable, Nathan showed his prudence, and great need there is of prudence in giving reproof. But here, in its application, he shows his faithfulness, and deals as plainly and roundly with King David himself as if he had been a common person" (*Matthew Henry*). Compare the similar plain-dealing of Samuel with King Saul, of the "man of God" with King Jeroboam, of Elijah with King Ahab, of Elisha with King Jehoram, of Isaiah with King Ahaz.

12.8-25. In these verses we are told Nathan's scathing words to David, reminding him of what God had done for him, charging him with contempt of God in the sins he had committed and threatening judgment upon his family for his sins. David, in sincerest penitence exclaims, I have sinned against the Lord. Nathan then assures him of God's pardon but pronounces a sentence of death upon the child. Nathan returns home, the child falls ill, David mourns, the child dies, and David says, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me". The birth of another son born to Bathsheba is recorded: he is named Solomon, but Nathan calls him Jedidiah—Beloved of Jehovah—"for Jehovah's sake". David joins Joab in the attack upon the city of Rabbah and captures it. David's penitence is the subject of our next lesson.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11.27. *When the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife.* Not to speak of polygamy, concubinage was fashionable in the best families. The promptness with which David, the outlaw chief, espoused the wife of the newly dead Nabal, and with which David the

King, made a lawful wife of the widow of the murdered Uriah, speaks plainly of the subserviency of well-born women.—*Dr. J. M. McCurdy* in *History, Prophecy and the Monuments.*

12.14 *By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme.* We see David today at his worst, guilty of breaking two laws of the Decalogue. There is no record in the Bible of cool, remorseless treachery which surpasses David's in the way he accomplished the death of the husband of the woman he had determined to add to his harem. But to estimate the man, Dr. Henry Preserved Smith reminds us, "we must remember that he was an oriental and therefore sensual, crafty and cruel. In no one of these qualities did he fall below the standards of the times in which he lived. The case of Uriah, indeed, shocked the moral sense of his contemporaries. It is not our concern to hold him up as a pattern of all the virtues. Probably few men of his time, however, would have gone through difficulties which he encountered and done so little to offend the conscience of a later time."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What enemies has David subdued since he was made King of all Israel? What conquests has he made? What became the extent of his territory? What good qualities did David show as a shepherd lad? At King Saul's court? As an outlaw? As a King? For what was King Saul rebuked by the prophet Samuel, and how did he take reproof? What is the first parable given in the Bible? What is a parable?

Three Periods in David's Life as King. David's life as King of Israel divides naturally into three periods: (1) a period of war and conquest; (2) a period of peace and prosperity; (3) a period of domestic troubles. Our lesson belongs to the earliest period, for it was while the Ammonite war was being carried on that the events occurred, but the effect of David's sin is seen in the long list of domestic troubles that followed.

David's Character. Professor Kent in his History of the Hebrew People, thus estimates David's character:—In him the elements of strength and weakness peculiar to his age find their clearest illustration. His versatility and tendency to do everything in the superlative explain why different generations and individuals have regarded him with such varying degrees of favor. As a matter of fact, his character was neither that of the Christian saint nor of the designing villain. The two opposite tendencies—either to condone his faults while idealizing his virtues, or to try and condemn him before the bar of modern ethics—are equally unjust and misleading. He was a man of his times, and should therefore be measured by the standards of his own day. In so doing, the mistake of holding up an imperfect character as a model for the present is avoided, and at the same time a true estimate of the real David is gained. It must be remembered constantly that he was removed from the period of the judges by only one generation. The years of bitter warfare which joined the days of Gideon and David were not calculated to soften the barbarity of Israel's pioneer epoch. When an enlightened seer like Samuel hewed a captured enemy into pieces (1 Sam. 15), little clemency can be expected from a conquering king. We shudder when we read of David's treatment of the subjugated Moabites and Edomites, and yet he was only acting in accordance with the practices of the old Semitic world. He did not hesitate on many occasions to pervert the truth when an object was to be gained; in the words of Saul, "he was able to deal very subtly." To the priests of Nob and his Philistine patron, Achish king of Gath, he deliberately made misrepresentations; but he lived among a people who at that stage in their development regarded the ability to deceive successfully as almost a virtue. Even today the proverb, "A lie is the salt of a man," voices the sentiment of the orient. The means which David used to secure the kingship of all Israel certainly are laudable compared with those which were then in vogue. The defects, which we who stand in the full light of New Testament revelation so deeply deplore, commended rather than condemned David in the eyes of his contemporaries. Of all his recorded acts, two alone fall far below the standards which were known at that time. The dethroned tyrants, Lust and Murder, who had ruled supreme over primitive man, for the time being mastered Israel's king. They gained the ascendancy under the

guise of those current oriental ideas according to which a monarch was regarded as the irresponsible master of his subjects. But David as a Hebrew king was responsible both to his people and to Jehovah, the God of righteousness; against both he sinned consciously.

While David's crimes against society were the most culpable, the greatness and breadth of his character were demonstrated by his repentance. The narrative does not suggest that he felt any such overpowering sense of sin as came to the enlightened Hebrews of a later age; but the sight of a conquering monarch humbly confessing his sins was unprecedented. It bespoke a high degree of moral sensibility, and furnished most unequivocal evidence that he recognized the law of Jehovah as superior to that of his own royal will.

The recognition of this divine law is the key to the understanding of his character. If he had stood in the full light of prophetic teaching, it is doubtful whether he would have committed his dark crimes; surely the spiritual light within him was not strong enough to reveal the heinousness of deceit and of cruelty to his enemies. At the same time, it is clear that he was one who deeply and genuinely feared Jehovah; in this respect he was far in advance of the kings who preceded and immediately followed him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The conversation between Nathan and David took place at David's palace, Jerusalem. See p. 239.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Nathan's method with David well repays a careful study. The task of bringing his sin home to David is intrusted to him; how does he accomplish it? Note in the first place that he does not go to the interview and trust to the moment for the right words to say. He has given much study and thought to the question, and when he appears before David he has his plan of procedure all in mind, he knows how he will begin, how he will gain David's attention and keen interest, how he will arouse his judgment upon his sin, how he will make the home-thrust, with what words he will close his talk. There is no blundering haphazard work here. Had Nathan gone to David and announced that he had come to rebuke him and then had given his views upon the enormity of David's conduct, would not David have said that he was King and could do as he wished (as Ahab thought in the matter of Naboth's Vineyard), or have otherwise excused himself? Certainly no deep impression would have been made upon his conscience.

Nathan's clever parable and the skill with which he made David pass judgment upon his own sin recall the methods of the Great Teacher. With unbiased judgment he listened to Nathan's story, and gave sentence just as did the Chief Priests and Pharisees when Jesus told them the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. "When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" asked Jesus. "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons," they answered. Thus they passed judgment upon themselves, and not till Jesus added, "the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" did they perceive that he spake of them.

Study the minister's method with the young man, as told on p. 250.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

In "The Castle of Zion," Dean George Hodges gives this account of the death of Uriah. Study it carefully and adapt it where necessary to your pupils' understanding.

The Israelites were besieging a city of their enemy, the Ammonites. One time the Ammonites came boldly into the open fields before the gate of the city and attacked the besiegers. And Joab set his army in array against them, and in the foremost rank in the front of the battle, he placed a stout soldier named Uriah the Hittite.

So they fell to fighting very furiously, and the Ammonites retreated, and the man of Israel pursued them even to the city gate. But on the top of the gate were archers, and they shot arrows and drove their enemies back. The arrows flew into the faces of the Israelites like hail driven by the wind. In this encounter, Uriah the Hittite was killed.

Then Joab sent a messenger to Jerusalem to David, to tell him about the progress of the siege. Joab said to the messenger: "When the King hears how we were driven back with loss of life, he will be very angry, he will say, 'Why did you go so near the city? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman cast a piece of millstone upon him from the wall of Thebez so that he died? Why did you go so near the wall?' Then you are to look the King very steadily in the face and say, 'Thy servant, Uriah the Hittite, is dead also.'"

So the messenger came to the King, and told him the bad news of the battle; and David was quite as angry as Joab had expected.

"Why did you go so near the wall"? he cried. "You should have known that they would shoot upon you from the gate. You should have had more sense than to get within range of the arrows of the archers. Go back now to Joab and tell him from me—

But then the mesenger added a word more. Looking the King steadily in the face, he said, "But thy servant, Uriah the Hittite, is dead also."

Instantly the King's manner changed. "Go now", he said, "and say to Joab. 'Let not this defeat distress you. The sword devours one as well as another. Make your attack stronger till you overcome the city. Do not be discouraged.'"

For, the day before the battle, Uriah the Hittite had carried a letter from David to Joab and in the letter, which Uriah could not read, the King said to the General, "Let the bearer of this letter be in the forefront of the hottest battle, and when you are attacked draw back and leave him, that he may be smitten and die." Joab had obeyed the order of the King, and Uriah had been slain in battle according to the King's command.

The reason for the killing of Uriah was this. Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, was very beautiful, and one day, while Uriah was in the land of Ammon fighting for King David, the King saw Bathsheba, and she pleased him much. He determined to add her to the number of his wives. But to do this he must somehow get rid of her husband. Thus he sent Uriah to Joab with the fatal letter.

Tell your pupils that David was the King, and he thought that he could do all this because he was King. It is sad to find David, who has been so brave and noble, so thoughtful of his friends and so generous in his treatment of Saul, who wanted to kill him, doing such a wicked deed. But the Bible tells about the faults as well as the virtues of its heroes. The thing that David had done displeased God, and he sent Nathan, a prophet, to rebuke him. Show Tissot's picture No. 87, Nathan Reproaches David. Tell the parable and explain it.

Teach your pupils this prayer: "O Lord, our Heavenly Father, lead me, guard me, help me, bless me, keep me, make me pure and brave and true in all I think and say and do!"

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A certain timid minister was preaching before Louis XVI on the subject of death. "All men must die," he thundered. But when he noticed that the King did not like to be reminded of this fact, for he frowned and moved uneasily in his chair, the minister was so startled by these signs of royal displeasure that he stammered, "I-I-I mean almost all, your Majesty." A certain courageous chaplain was talking to King David on the subject of sin—not sin in general, but David's sin. What was his name? David had done something which displeased Jehovah, and Jehovah sent Nathan unto David, our text says. Let us see how different Nathan was from Louis the Sixteenth's minister. (The facts recorded in the verses printed from the 11th chapter may be called for after 12.17.)

For Older Pupils. There is a Northern legend told in the proem of one of Hall Caine's books, of a man who thought he was pursued by a monster.

His stacks were fired, his barns unroofed, his cattle destroyed, his lands blasted, his first-born slain. So he lay in wait for the monster where it lived in the chasms near his house, and in the darkness of night he saw it. With a cry he rushed upon it, and gripped it about the waist, and it turned upon him, and held him by the shoulder. Long he wrestled with it, reeling, staggering, falling and rising again; but at length a flood of strength came to him, and he overthrew it, and stood over it, covering it, conquering it, with its back against his thigh, and his hand hard at its throat. Then he drew his knife to kill it; and the moon shot through a cloud, opening an alley of light about it, and he saw its face, and lo, the face of the monster was *his own*.

The Rev. Hugh Black tells this legend in "Christ's Service of Love" and comments: We must learn that a man is his worst enemy—nay, that the only enemy we have to fear is ourself; and that we must come to close quarters with self; for it is only

When the fight's begun with himself,
A man's worth something.

Rigorous self-judgment is the first requisite of moral life, to turn the light in on self.

There are two parts to our lesson today; in the first we see how David was his own worst enemy; in the second we see how he was led to turn the light in upon himself, to give rigorous self-judgment.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Moral Blindness

She doesn't know it. "Will you have your men on the lookout for a young girl?" a nurse in a hospital telephoned anxiously to a chief of police one very cold day recently. After describing the girl's appearance, the nurse added: "She is feeble-minded and we are very much worried because she had neither hat nor coat, and she doesn't know it is cold, so she may freeze."

"Doesn't know it's cold!" exclaimed the chief. "Well, ten minutes at ten below zero ought to show her fast enough. Likely as not, she's gone into some house on the way, and is getting thawed out."

"Oh, but you don't understand," the nurse cried. "She's half-witted. She doesn't know cold and heat. She might sit down in a doorway and freeze, and never know she was cold at all. That's what we are afraid of—that she may freeze to death."

The girl was found, just in time to prevent the calamity the nurse feared. She was sauntering idly about the street, and although her feet and hands were already frozen, she was unconscious of it.

This true story is a parable. What is the application?

Two Old Women. Mr. Pyle has a poem which is entitled "Moral Blindness." The first dame owned a goose which she allowed to roam where it would and its cackling disturbed the peace of the whole town, "from the dawn to the close of the day." The second dame owned a goat which she allowed to roam, and all the town was in fear of it, for it butted whoever came in his way.

Said the first old woman, "This ugly goat
  Should never thus run at loose."
Said the second, "I wish they'd cut the throat
  Of that noisy cackling goose."
And so it happened when e'er that they
Would meet each other upon the way
They'd bicker and bicker the livelong day
  In the key of a scolding note.
But all the neighbours, great and small,
  Complained of both with grievous tone.
From which I gather that we all
  See other's faults and not our own.

Is there Blindness to Conditions in America? We stand aghast at the evidences of the hardness among the criminal classes which come to us from Southern Europe; but we forget out of what a school of childhood the most of these pitiless enemies of society came. Madame Montessori, the Italian educator, gives this glimpse of the conditions in a certain quarter in Rome, where the poor and degraded are isolated, even as they are isolated in every great city in this country: "The papers tell us of women pursued and killed by drunken husbands, of young girls with the fear of worse than death, stoned by low men. Again, we see untellable things—a wretched woman thrown by drunken men into the gutter. There, when day has come, the children of the neighborhood crowd about her like scavengers about their prey, shouting and laughing at the sight of this wreck of womanhood, kicking her body as it lies in the mud of the gutter." What must be the character of the men and women for whose childhood society provided such a school of brutality as that? And the appalling thing is that here in this our own land American society is permitting hundred of thousands of children, in our city slums and in neglected sections, to grow up under conditions little better than those of that hell-spot in Rome, where virtue has no opportunity to hold her white symbols before their eyes, but where the vast museum of vice is forever open, making its appeals to all the germs of evil in their hearts. From an *Editorial* in the *Sunday School Journal.*

II Thou Art the Man

Nathan Rebukes David. The first thing that strikes us is the blindness and infatuation of the man to have missed the application of the Parable. It seems an almost impossible state of self-deception which could let him flare out in indignant virtue against the supposed culprit, and never once dream that the case could apply to himself. But it is not such an impossible thing as it looks; nay, it is even one of the commonest facts of morals, and one which we can easily illustrate any day among ourselves. We nod assent to a general statement of right and wrong, accept principles, even give our unbiased judgment on concrete cases that are mentioned; and yet never make the personal application. *Hugh Black,* in *Christ's Service of Love.*

Dr. Brown Rebukes a Young Man. "If I choose to go to the devil, it's my own business!" the young man declared to his minister defiantly. "My life is my own."

"Let me tell you of a young fellow I knew once," Doctor Brown answered quietly. "His father was a hard-working shoemaker in narrow circumstances. All the happiness the father or mother knew consisted in their hopes for their son. They wanted him to have the advantages that had been denied to them. They were godly people, and wanted the son to be able to do God's work on earth. To that end, they gladly denied themselves every luxury. They scraped and pinched year after year, in order that their boy might have a college education. At last the boy entered college. The money so laboriously saved, and consecrated by his parents' long sacrifices, he spent in barrooms and other evil places. He neglected his work. He acquired vicious habits instead. What is your opinion of the boy?" he asked.

The young man's lip curled. "There's only one thing to say," he replied. "He was a hopeless cur!"

"No doubt of it!" said Dr. Brown. Then he turned squarely on the young man. "But wherein, essentially, does he differ from *you?* I see *your* life crowded with all the blessings of the age. Where did they come from? They came from the unselfish toilers of the past! They came from self-denying saints and martyrs of every-day life in every age. We shouldn't have the civilization we know if men and women had not denied themselves and sacrificed themselves, and fought and bled and died in their eagerness to keep the lamp of truth and goodness lighted.

"Back in the ages I see One hanging upon a cross. Down through the ages I see the long line of those who have followed in his way, who have literally given *themselves* to the work of making this a better world, although they were crushed in the process. Because of their devotion, America today is different from China and India. I see your own father and mother, who, like all real fathers and mothers want more than anything else that you should

become a sturdy and righteous man. Though they never made the same sacrifices that the shoemaker made, they would have done so gladly if as a result you would be finer and better. All you are, you are because of others. All you have has been given to you for a purpose as distinct as the purpose for which that boy went to college. You pronounced judgment on him quickly. What more can you say for yourself?"

The young man's face was burning in honest shame. "Only this," he answered. "I realize now that my life is *not* my own. By the obligations that others have laid me under, I am bound in honor to fulfill their purposes." *Youth's Companion.*

Christ Rebukes Us. Jesus Christ spoke to men directly, faithfully, searchingly. Yet it was long before some of Christ's listeners appreciated the personal bearing of his address. The Sadducee thought that he smote the Pharisee, whilst the Pharisee supposed that he rebuked the Sadducee; the aristocracy looked upon him as a teacher of the democracy, and the common people considered him especially severe on pride and power. "They perceived" not "that he spake of them." *W. L. Watkinson.*

III Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

Virginibus Puerisque. "Where is Jack?" asked Mr. Rogers, as he came in at six o'clock. "He was late to dinner last night, and he's going to be late again tonight."

"I saw him with that Jones girl," answered his daughter Dorothy. "She is a new girl in town, very pretty, but terribly bold. I'm sure she's not nice. I do wish Jack wouldn't go with her."

Presently the door opened, and Jack came in. "Jack," said his father, "I want to show you something."

Relief and interest showed instantly in the boy's face. The dreaded question was not to be asked, after all. Mr. Rogers led the way to his workroom in the attic. There were his carpenter-bench and his tools and his lathe, and in the corner was the dynamo that worked it. Jack had seen them all many times.

"What is it, father?" he asked.

Mr. Rogers laid his hand upon the dynamo. "Jack, by means of this, a mysterious power becomes mine. We call it electricity, but no one knows what it is. We only know that *if we treat it in the right way,* it will enable us to do wonderful things. It will work our mills, and light our houses and our streets, and run our cars. It will enable man to do more than any other power that has been discovered. But at the same time, *if you treat it in the wrong way, it will strike you dead."*

"Yes, father, I know that," said Jack.

His father turned toward him with an earnestness that Jack had never before seen in his face. "There is another power, very like it in results. There is the mysterious feeling that men have for women and women have for men. Treat that right and it will bless your life and ennoble it, and make you ten times, yes, a hundred times, the man you could ever be without it. Nothing on earth will do so much for you if you treat it right. But treat that feeling wrong, and it will curse you, and blast your life, and kill your immortal soul!"

For a moment they looked each other square in the eye. Then together they went downstairs in silence. In the hall below, Jack put his hand on his father's arm. "I know what you mean, father, and I know it's true!" he whispered. *Youth's Companion.*

Hominibus. Kriloff, a Russian author, has written a fable entitled, "The Robber and the Author." Both were condemned in hell to be placed in cauldrons under which fires were to be kindled. Under the robber there was placed a roaring fire which soon effected his destruction. The author, who had written books widely read, which contained the poisonous influences of immoral suggestions, had a lesser fate at first, for under him was placed a small, slow fire. But the longer it lasted, the larger it grew. The author protested at the unfairness.

Then one of the "furies" approached him and said: "Wretch, dost thou upbraid Providence? Dost thou compare thyself with the robber? His crime

is as nothing compared with thine. Only as long as he lived did his cruelty and lawlessness render him hurtful. But thou!—long ago have thy bones crumbled to dust, yet the sun never rises without bringing to light fresh evils of which thou art the cause. The poison of thy vintage not only does not weaken, but speeding ahead, it becomes more malignant as the years roll by. Look here," and for a moment he enabled him to look upon the world: "behold the cries, the misery, of which thou art the cause. Look at these children who have brought shame upon their families, who have reduced their parents to despair. By whom were their heads and hearts corrupted? By thee. Who strove to rend asunder the bands of society, ridiculing as childish follies all ideas of the sanctity of marriage and the right of authority and law, and rendering them responsible for all human misfortunes? Thou art the man! Didst thou not dignify unbelief with the name of enlightenment? Didst thou not place vice and passion in the most charming and alluring of lights? And now look!—a whole country, perverted by thy teaching, is being led by thee onward to ruin. Continue, then, to suffer, for here the measure of thy punishment shall be according to thy deserts."

Who shall Ascend into the Hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place? questioned the choir without the ancient city gates of Jerusalem. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, replied the choir within the gates.

A native stone-worker in one of the small Indian villages of Mexico had given his time with many others and had helped erect a chapel. When the little church was dedicated, he gave this beautiful testimony: "All the while that I was building this temple I thought that it would be the place where God would dwell, and as I put one stone upon another I prayed that God would make my heart a temple for him to dwell in."

That is the intent of the Boy Scouts. These are the Scout Laws: A Scout is loyal, he is helpful, he is friendly, courteous, kind; he is obedient, cheerful thrifty, and brave; he is clean in body and thought, he stands for clean speech, clean sport, clean habits, and travels with a clean crowd. And he is reverent toward God.

The Blood of Jesus Christ Cleanseth from All Sin. After representatives from each of the great Oriental religions had spoken at the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago during the Columbian Exposition, and each had declared the beauties of his own faith in glowing terms, Joseph Cook stood up to represent the Christian Religion. This is the way in which he began: "Here is Lady Macbeth. See how she rubs her hands, as she asks, 'Will these hands ne'er be clean;' What religion can wash Lady Macbeth's right hand? That is a question I propose to the four continents and all the isles of the sea. I put to infidels the question, 'Can you wash our red right hands?' All that skepticism or average liberalism says, or has ever said, in answer to this supreme inquiry is insufficient to meet man's deepest spiritual necessities. I turn to Mohammedanism. 'Can you wash our red right hands?' I turn to Confucianism and Buddhism and Brahmanism, 'Can you wash our red right hands?' I ask it in the name of what I hold to be an absolutely self-evident truth, that unless a man is washed from the love of sin and the guilt of sin, he cannot be at peace in the presence of Infinite Holiness. It is a certainty, and a strategic certainty, that, except Christianity, there is no religion known to man that effectively provides for the soul the double deliverance from the love of sin and the guilt of it."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Does every one need to offer this prayer? How about those who never break any of the Ten Commandments, whose lives "pass muster with the crowd," as some of them say, who have committed no great sins from which they need cleansing—should they offer this prayer? High class Hindu soldiers believe that if only the shadow of an unclean bird like a vulture falls upon their food or their cooking utensils these are rendered unclean, and they keep dogs which are trained to drive away the birds before they can come near enough to cast a shadow. The thought of this superstition is a true one—the shadow of evil is defiling. The shadow—the thought of sin darkens the soul. Whoever is conscious of God must be conscious of sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God.

Our Prayer:

Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Ps. 139. 23, 24.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Thou art the man. See the Second Topic. The fact recognized, what follows? After listening to a social service talk given under the auspices of the Men and Religion Movement, the owner of a brickmaking plant at once set to work and ripped off the roof from his long, dark building, and put on a glass roof, so that the workers' eyesight might not be damaged. The owner of one branch of a great food trust lowered the price and increased the size of the loaf of bread he was selling. What practical results should be brought about in our community?

2. Sin is sin, and deserves the same punishment at the hands of public justice whether committed by King or subject, rich or poor, wise or ignorant.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What is the meaning of each of the three words used in the first two verses to express sin? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 254.) 2. What is the meaning of each of the three words used to express Divine forgiveness? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 254.) 3. In what one of Paul's letters are these verses quoted? (Rom. 4.6-8.) 4. Explain verse 3. (*Guide,* p. 254.) 5. Explain verse 4. (*Guide,* p. 255.) 6. What kind of weather does Palestine have in summer? (*Guide,* ¶ 9, p. 256.) 7. What does Dr. Henry van Dyke tell us about the historical associations connected with this Psalm? (*Guide,* p. 257.) 8. To whom did Jesus announce pardon by saying, "Go, and sin no more"? 9. What young man once came to Jesus who was unconscious of having sinned? (Mark 10.) 10. What does John say in one of his epistles about confession and forgiveness? (1 Jn. 1.8, 9.) 11. What conditions must be fulfilled before God's forgiveness becomes effective? (Prov. 28.13.)

Questions to think about. 1. What does "without guile" mean? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 254.) 2. What is the meaning of "For this," verse 6? What verse of the Psalm would you choose for a Golden Text today? 4. What words about forgiveness did Christ give in the prayer which he taught his disciples? 5. What did Jesus say about his authority to forgive sins? 6. By what beautiful parable did Jesus teach the readiness of God to forgive? 7. If one is sorry that he has sinned, is that sufficient to obtain forgiveness? 8. What is the full meaning of repentance? 9. If a sin is forgiven, are its consequences cancelled?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of David write Part IX, David Rebuked by Nathan.

Questions upon the Psalms. 1. What is our Book of Psalms called? 2. What does the word "Psalter" mean? 3. How do the superscriptions of the Psalms classify them? 4. When were these titles written? 5. What does the title of the 96th Psalm show? 6. What proportion of the Psalms were written by David? 7. To whom besides David do the titles ascribe the Psalms? 8. What are the "Orphan Psalms"? 9. During how many centuries were the Psalms being written? 10. When were they first used as a hymn-book? 11. Into what five collections are they divided in our Bibles? 12. What reason for having five books is given by the Midrash? 13. What are their themes? 14. In what groups may they be classified as to theme? 15. What are some of their characteristics? 16. What three great qualities does Dr. van Dyke say distinguish them? 17. What explanation can you give for the fact that in so many the kernel is given in the opening words and the closing words are in the nature of a vow? 18. What are the Imprecatory Psalms? 19. What is their value? 20. Which Psalms are called Psalms of Degrees? 21. Why are they so called? 22. What are the Messianic Psalms? 23. What is the peculiarity of the Psalms as poetry? 24. How do they rank as poetry? 25. What lessons for today have they? 26. What value for you have they? 27. Which Psalms do you know by heart? 28. Which Psalms do you like the best?

LESSON XI—JUNE 13

THE BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS

Golden Text

**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered. Psalm 32.1**

LESSON Psalm 32 MEMORIZE verse 5

**1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
3 When I kept silence, my bones wasted away
Through my groaning all the day long.
4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
My moisture was changed *as* with the drought of summer. [Selah
5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee,
And mine iniquity did I not hide:
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah;
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.
6 For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found:
Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him.
7 Thou art my hiding-place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble;
Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. [Selah
8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:
I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.
9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding;
Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in,
Else they will not come near unto thee.
10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;
But he that trusteth in Jehovah, lovingkindness shall compass him about.
11 Be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice, ye righteous;
And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.**

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1-2. *Blessed.* "The word in the original is not singular but plural, as if to express the number and variety of the joys which the Psalmist had found—O the happiness of him whose transgression is forgiven!" (*Van Dyke*). "The passive participle describes the subject as having the action continually exercised upon him—Blessed is the man who abides in this state of forgiveness" (*Adams*). "Sin and happiness do not travel on the same car, for they are not journeying on the same road" (*N. Y. Observer*).—*Transgression . . . forgiven; sin . . . covered; imputeth not iniquity.* Note the three words used to express the sin and the three words used to express the forgiveness. As Dr. van Dyke observes, though these verses are full of the freshness of natural emotion, they are not carelessly or thoughtlessly constructed, they are most wonderful in the wealth of their meaning and the exactness of their language. *Transgression* is a going beyond bounds, a departure from God; *sin* is missing the mark, failing to reach the true aim; *iniquity* is a crookedness within, moral deformity. *Forgiven* is taken away, the burden of guilt lifted; *covered* is hidden, "out of sight beneath the mantle of God's mercy"; *imputeth not* is not estimated in connection with the sinner, "is blotted out from God's book of accounts like a cancelled debt". Dr. Briggs tells us that *is covered* is in Hebrew a term commonly used in connection with sacrifices, where the sin, as staining and defiling the divine altars, was covered over by the application to them of the blood of the victim of the sin-offering. *Imputeth not iniquity* is translated in Rom. 4.8 *will not reckon sin.—No guile.* No insincerity. "This does not mean that he must be like an angel in purity, for then the condition would be so hard that it would shut us all out. It means simply that the man who asks

God's forgiveness must be sincere and true and candid, like the earnest disciple whom Christ saw under the fig-tree" (*Van Dyke*).

3-4. These verses describe in poetic language the torture of an awakened conscience.—*When I kept silence.* When I refused to confess my sin.—*My bones wasted away.* Thus the torments of conscience are expressed. "The bones ached in sympathy with the distress of the soul" (*Briggs*). "Let the soul be in chaos, and the body will soon be a ruin" (*Jowett*). —*Groaning.* Hebrew, *roaring,* RVm.—*Day and night.* What terrors the conscience calls up at night!—*Thy hand was heavy upon me.* Remorse and perhaps sickness, the Psalmist recognizes as from God. "God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulders, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David" (*Spurgeon*).—*My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer.* "By the inward anguish in the struggle not to confess, his moisture, *i.e.* the juices of life, was turned, as it were, into the drought of Summer" (*Perowne*). See Light from Oriental Life. Compare Prov. 17.22: a broken spirit drieth up the bones.—*Selah.* See ¶ 1, p. 236.

5. Dr. Lyman Abbott in one of his letters observes that repentance is not an airy, jaunty, careless going back to God, with a belief that nothing serious has happened and that the account is easily settled. How serious the happening the Psalmist has expressed in verses three and four, and verse five is a study in confession—here there is no careless going back to God. *I acknowledged* is in the imperfect tense in the Hebrew and represents graphically the beginning of confession, the initial stage, *I began to make known. I said, I will confess my transgression unto Jehovah* is the second stage. "The more he realized the presence of the foul intruder who had usurped his inmost being, the more he determined to drag it forth into the open, and expose it to the searching glance of God" (*Adams*). *Mine iniquity did I not hide.* The confession is made, he bows humbly in the felt presence of God. "God covers sin, but man must not cover his sin before God" (*Perowne*). See Prov. 28.13.—*Thou forgavest.* "Let no man despair of God's mercies to forgive him unless he be sure that his sins be greater than God's mercies" (*Jeremy Taylor*).

6-7. *For this.* Because of this fact that thou art a forgiving God.—*Let every one.* Let others learn from my experience.—*In a time when thou mayest be found.* Compare Isa. 55.6. Or, in the time of finding out sin, RVm. "So the original text should probably read (as the margin gives it), but it has been changed by copyist's error into 'time when thou mayest be found' which limits the petition to a particular time, and so is against the context, which exhorts to pray in time of sin and trouble" (*Briggs*).—*When the great waters overflow . . Songs of deliverance.* A figure of speech which expresses the forgiven sinner's peace. "We think of one like Jeremiah fleeing from the men of Anathoth, Jer. 12.1-5. Casting himself down in the same remote spot overlooking the valley of the Jordan, he brooded, like Elijah under the juniper tree, on the violence by which he had been assailed, and questioned the ways and acts of Eternal Providence. But hark! wafted on the night wind came the noise of a foaming flood. The 'swelling of Jordan' as in the floods of autumn, was sweeping this furious volume to the sea. And the far-off boom was enough to strike even a strong man with dismay. For was it not suggestive of something far more ominous and forbidding? What if that distant sound should give place to the dreaded reality? and the prophet, one day, had to pass through the dark flood itself? It is only the man who is strong in the assurance of covenant mercy, who can give the answer of this Psalm that even the *sound* of the mighty waters shall not come nigh unto him. In the rapture of a Divine forgiveness, there is no sound to him save one—he is compassed about with 'songs of deliverance'" (*Adams*).

8-9. These verses are a surprise, because in the earlier verses God is addressed in the second person, and here he speaks in the first person, and in verse 10-11 he is referred to in the third person. Dr. Briggs explains verses 8 and 9 as "a supplementary advice of a late editor to all who listen to the Psalm." It is furthermore of different measure and strophical organization. The verses may, however, well be understood as Dr. McFadyen interprets them, p. 256. The meaning of the verse is that "God does not leave those whom he counsels to walk in their own strength, but watches over their ways." Verse

9 is an exhortation to yield willing, not forced, obedience to God's will.—*Which have no understanding.* They are incapable of receiving counsel, hence must be guided by bit and bridle.

10.-11. These verses are still different in meter and are counted by some scholars a still later addition.—*Many sorrows.* Thought of as punishments.—*Lovingkindness shall compass him about.* "Obviously, one may well speak of the blessedness of the forgiven state. It is free from alarms by night, encircled by song by day, and characterized by deep, spiritual communion while life lasts—in a word, compassed about by Divine mercy" (*Adams*). "Verse eleven is a glad ascription of praise, a grand 'Hallelujah Chorus' of exultant adoration and praise." "Only those who have struck the deepest note of penitence can reach the highest note of praise" (*A. J. Gordon*).

1-11. This Psalm is so difficult that this interpretation by Dr. J. E. McFadyen in "The Messages of the Psalmists," will be found helpful:—

Oh how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How happy is the man who confesses with sincerity! for Jehovah imputes no guilt to him.

As long as my lips were sealed against confession, I wasted away with my ceaseless crying. Day and night Thy hand lay heavy upon me; my life was dried up like a brook in the summer heat. But the moment I resolved to confess my sin openly and hide it no more, that moment didst Thou remove the guilt thereof.

Knowing as I do the joy of forgiveness, I would fain urge every godly one to pray to Thee in time of trouble, that he may not be overtaken by the rushing waters. To them, as to me, Thou canst be a shelter, preserving them from danger and bringing deliverance on every side.

There comes to me, too, this assurance from my God; "I will give thee wisdom," He says, "and teach thee henceforward the way thou shouldst go, with My gracious eye steadfastly upon thee."

But, if God is to forgive, men must gladly yield themselves to the discipline divine, nor must they rebel like the senseless brutes, which have to be controlled by bit and bridle, else they can not be brought nigh.

So the secret of blessedness is trust in God. He whose trust is in Him will experience the love of God on every hand, while the godless have sorrows many. Be glad therefore in your God, and rejoice in him, O Israel; yea, shout for very joy.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer.* This is a striking figure of speech to anyone who has visited Palestine in the summer. Palestine has two seasons, the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season lasts from October until April. The "early rains" occur late in October or early in November, and last for a day or two at a time. The heavy rains begin about the middle of December and are well called "The Pourers." In March and April there are heavy showers called the "latter rains" and then "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone," as the Song of Solomon tells us. Showers rarely fall in May and no rain whatever falls between June and October. All is changed with the drought of summer, the raging winter torrents are dried up, and water in Judea is very scarce.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When Saul sinned and his sin was brought home to him, was he repentant? How did David receive Nathan's words regarding his sin? Was David truly repentant? What was our first Golden Text this year?

David's Sin and Psalm Thirty-two. Last week we studied Nathan's parable by which he brought home to David his sin. David's penitence and forgiveness are recorded in the succeeding verses of 2. Sam. 11.

The heading of Psalm 51 states that it is "A contrite sinner's prayer for pardon, a Psalm of David when Nathan the Prophet came unto him." The heading of Psalm 32 is: "Blessedness of forgiveness and of trust in God. A Psalm of David." It is generally believed that these two Psalms express David's penitence for these sins, and his joy in the pardon received. It has been

well said that in the earlier Psalm, the 51st, David is the prodigal saying, "Father, I have sinned," and in the 32d Psalm he is the son restored to the Father's heart, looking up into his Father's face and saying, "Thou art my hiding place."

Historical Associations connected with the Psalm. "We may think of its words as they were chanted in the sonorous Hebrew tongue, year after year, century after century, at the close of the service on the Day of Atonement, gathering upon their wings the rejoicings of thousands and ten thousands of pardoned sinners, and bearing them upward from the great court of the Temple into the bright sky," writes Dr. van Dyke in "The Story of the Psalms". "We may think of St. Paul sitting in the house of Gaius in the busy city of Corinth and poring over this Psalm as a proof of the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins (Rom. IV. 7,8.) We may think of St. Augustine lying upon his sick-bed and reading the words of this Psalm which he had written upon the opposite wall for his continual comfort and daily meditation. We may think of Galileo in his Roman prison repeating this Psalm every week for three years, a task which his inquisitors doubtless imposed upon him for a penance, but which must have proved a consolation and an encouragement to his soul. We may think of Martin Luther expressing his conviction that this Psalm was one of the four most precious in the whole book, 'because,' said he, 'it teaches that the pardon of sin comes without the law and without works to the man who believes.' And thus we can see David fulfilling his promise that if God would open his lips, his mouth should show forth the praise of his Redeemer. We can hear this song flowing down through the ages like an unfailing stream of help and refreshment of which every man may drink, and yet it is not diminished but rather increased and filled with new sweetness."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Here is a girl arrested for theft, who is a member of a respectable family, and it is her first offense. "Oh, how could I have been so foolish!" She cries. Here is a boy, guilty of forgery, and he too, calls himself a fool and wonders how he could have done it. How common is such an attitude toward sin, the guilty one regarding his sin only as an act of colossal stupidity which has wrecked his reputation in the eyes of others. He has not the first conception of what sin means or of what its consequences are. Genuine repentance is far from him, and the blessedness of forgiveness never comes to his heart. Far otherwise was it with David when he cried,

> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in thy sight.
> Create in me a clean heart, O God;
> And renew a right spirit within me.

Today's lesson is a study in the nature of sin and forgiveness. Every pupil should learn that sin is an offense against God, and that God only can cleanse the heart and cover the sin. "The essence of religion is a transaction with God; and the essence of the Christian religion is a transaction with Christ."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Once a mother was passing the door of the bed-room where her little daughter lay, as she thought, asleep, but she heard the sounds of low sobbing instead of the regular breathing she had expected. She went in and sat down by the bedside, and putting her arms around the child, said "What is the matter, dear?" "Oh, mother, I am so miserable", was the answer; "I was so cross with my little sister today and wished she was dead. And now I feel so wicked, I can't get to sleep. Can God forgive me?" The child had indeed been very angry with her younger sister, and had threatened her and stormed at her. All through the day she had kept her heart hard and vindictive and proud, saying to herself: "I was not in the wrong. It served her right." But in the quiet, dark hours, her conscience had spoken to her. She saw how harsh and bitter she had been, and that she had fed a serpent in her heart. Then she thought in

a dim way of God, and of all his kindness to her, and she felt that she could never, never be forgiven, and that she never could be really made good. Have you ever felt a little like this? Have you ever felt miserable because of the wrong things you have said and done? I bring you a message of hope and love today.

Follow this introduction (taken from "Little Sermons to Children", by R. C. Gillie) by calling for the Golden Text and explaining it. Tell about John and the gate-post, below. Talk about repentance, showing that it means not only being sorry for wrong-doing, but asking God to forgive the evil and to keep the doer from committing such wrong-doing again. Omit all the verses of the Psalm save verses 8 and 9.

After leaving milk at our house, our milkman speaks to his horse as he himself crosses the road to the house opposite; and the horse turns around in the middle of the road, trots to the corner, turns to the left, and keeps on till he reaches a house in the middle of the block, where he waits for his master, who comes across through the rear of the lots, leaving his milk jars on the way. That horse seems to have understanding, but there are not many like him. Horses have to be guided by bit and bridle. Men are often like horses in this. Did you ever see men with a bit in their mouth? No, but did you never see a policeman walking down a street? (The remainder of this talk is from "In the Days of Youth" by J. Morgan Gibbon.) What do policemen in our streets mean? They mean that there are many men and women in this country who will not be honest or quiet or sober unless they are forced. They are like the horse and the mule. They have to be held in by bit and bridle. And not only grown-up people; children at home and in school very often are like little horses and mules, who won't do right or go right, unless they are made to.

Trappings of an Assyrian Horse

Bits and braces can keep horses in the right way; but men and women, boys and girls, cannot be made good, or kept good, against their own wishes. A policeman can, perhaps, stop a thief from stealing; but all the policemen in the world cannot stop him from wanting to steal, and as long as a man wants to steal he is a bad man—a thief in his heart, whether his hands take things or not.

How then should we be guided? By something that God has put into each one of us for that purpose. The text calls it "understanding". It is a rather long word, but I think you all know what it means. It is the real difference between men and animals.

No man would say to the best horse in the world, "Now I want you to take me to the bookseller's, then to the grocer's, and then to the railway station"; because no horse could understand—could know what it all meant. He has to be guided by bit and bridle.

But a child understands: he knows what words mean; he knows too, right from wrong, and he knows God's will about them. You know love from hate, truth from falsehood, good from bad, and you know perfectly well and at once, each time these things come before you, which you ought to choose. You know quite well that you ought to do right always; and the more you do what you ought, the more easily and plainly will you see what is right in every case.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A father once told his son that every time he disobeyed him a nail would be driven in the gate-post. The nails in that post multiplied. Every time a bad report came from school a nail was driven into the post, for not only disobediences but all things of which his father disapproved were thus recorded. But his father was just; every time his son obeyed he pulled out one of the nails. At length a happy day came. John passed down the walk and threw up his cap and shouted for joy; the nails were all out of the post, and for that he was glad; but the nail holes were all

in the post, and for that he was sorry. John would start out for a happy day, but as he passed the gate the nail holes were like eyes looking down into his soul. John has my sympathy, says Dr. Junius M. Farrar; there was something not exactly right about that gate-post. The Bible tells me that when God forgives he also forgets. He remembers our sins no more against us. The father when he forgave John, should have put in a new gate-post.

John's joy when he found all the nails removed was like that of David when he composed the thirty-second Psalm (or of the writer of the Psalm: see p. 49).

For Older Pupils. See The Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Need of Forgiveness

David's Need. Never was there a man who climbed so high and fell so low as David! Never one whose repentance was more absolute and all-inclusive. Never one who fought his way so persistently back toward the heights where good men dwell. Grateful to God for the lives of all the Bible heroes from Moses to Paul, to the end of time the prodigal and publican will be doubly grateful for the life and career of David, the Old Testament prodigal, who epitomizes for us man's defeat through sin and his recovery also through God's redeeming mercy. *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis,* in *David the Poet and King.*

All have Sinned. In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Jesus represents the Pharisee as saying: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." In a classification of Pharisees made by rabbinical writers, there is one called "The Pharisee who said, 'Would that I knew of a sin I had myself committed that I might make reparation by an act of virtue,'" and there is another called "The calculating Pharisee who said, 'My sins are more than counterbalanced by my virtues.'" There have always been people like these Pharisees. Such was a little girl who was heard to pray, "O God, bless Harry and make him as good as I am!" No wonder that Carlyle was led to say that the greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.

"If I was not a bad boy, I think I was a boy with a great absence of goodness," said Gladstone, looking back upon his youthful days. There are many such boys and girls today.

Acknowledgment of Sin with Guile. A woman once came to Charles Wesley for spiritual comfort. "I am the worst of sinners, utterly lost and helpless," she began. "I have no doubt, madam, that you are bad enough!" returned Wesley. At once she flew into a passion, called Wesley a slanderer, declared she was no worse than her neighbors, and so on.

A writer in the Sunday-School Chronicle tells of a child's observation. His father had taken the little fellow to church, where he had been much impressed by the liturgical part of the service. For some days after he could do nothing else but mimic the minister. One evening, while his father was busy with his books, the lad put on a make-believe surplice, and went round with his hands upon his breast and bowed head, murmuring, "We are all miserable sinners!" His father looked up and said gravely, "Yes, that is true, we are all miserable sinners." Quick as a lightning flash came the answer, "No, father! not weally!" The child had detected the schism between the Church confession and the realities of common life. He interpreted the service as a fine piece of acting.

II The Way to Forgiveness

Face the Fact. When a business man becomes suspicious that things are being mismanaged in his business, does he not set himself to find the truth, no matter who has to suffer by the finding? When a mother suspects that her daughter is not well, when she sees the hectic flush, or hears the cough, does not she face the truth although her heart is breaking and face it because she loves her child? And the strange thing is, that though men love themselves with a love that is ineradicable and intense, that is the course they very rarely take when they become suspicious of their state. Not one in a thousand

has the moral courage to look his true condition in the face. Not one in a thousand has ever cried despairingly, "God be merciful to me a sinner." *Dr. G. H. Morrison* in *The Afterglow of God.*

Conviction, Contrition, Confession. A man is lost, let us say, in that dark, interminable forest, about which travelers have told us. And he knows it. As he goes on, looking in vain this way and that, finding no path, he realizes his horrible condition. He knows not what to do; his friends are out of call, above him are the black trees, and all about him are the poisonous places where the sun never shines. The man is filled with dismay and despair, his heart is sick within him. Does that save him? He knows that he is out of the way, and he is as sorry for it as a man can be:—does that set him in the right path, and save him?

It is plain that if repentance is a condition of the spirit which really saves a man, really gets him within the blessed boundaries of the kingdom of heaven, it must be something more than conviction of sin, and something more than contrition for sin. To have our eyes open to the fact of sin is not enough; to have our eyes full of tears on account of sin is not enough; we have not yet repented.

The parable of the prodigal son will help us to understand what repentance is. Repentance implies a recognition of sin as something more than a deed to be ashamed of and sorry for; as more than an act which is followed by consequences of misery, by famine, forsaking of friends, company of swine, everlasting company of devils. Repentance means a sense of sin as an offense against a father. "I have sinned against him", against the power of God; and I am being righteously punished for that; but that is not the whole of it—"in thy sight, my father", have I sinned, against love, human and divine. My sin has been a grief and pain "before thee", I have set a separation between thee and me. I have lost the comfort, the strength, the refuge, the benediction, of thy love. "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." When a sinner recognizes that sin is itself more dreadful than everlasting punishment, then he is beginning to repent—to repent of sin.

Especially, repentance means a definite refusal to abide any longer in sin. Sin is no longer endurable. I do earnestly repent, the sinner cries out in his prayer. I am heartily sorry for these, my misdoings. Have mercy upon me, most merciful father, and forgive me! *Condensed* from *The Path of Life,* by *Dean George Hodges.*

A Parable about Repentance. Bachya, a rabbi of the eleventh century, has a beautiful parable about repentance. A traveler wanted to cross a stream. He was laden with a heap of silver coins, and in his folly he cast them into the water, all except one—thinking that he could thus build himself a bridge by which he could walk over. The coins were carried away by the tide and disappeared. But the one he had reserved for himself, he paid to a ferryman, who rowed him across. Repentance is the one coin that will carry a man across the stream of life to the Shore of Eternal Salvation, when all life's treasures have been foolishly squandered.

III The Blessing of Forgiveness

And Thou, Thou Forgavest the Iniquity of My Sin. The student will note the aoristic use of the perfect and the emphasis impressed on the pronoun "Thou". They combine to enforce the truth that Jehovah was more willing to forgive the returning penitent than the man himself was to come and solicit the blessing. The Psalmist was reviewing the various steps in the confession—how behind the transparent attitude of his present was lying the verbal appeal which he had addressed to Jehovah, and behind the actual presentation of his prayer the initial resolution of his heart; and *there* at the beginning of it all, like answering heart in an inner sanctuary, the Divine response was granted to the silent appeal, and the penitent entered into the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. As in the teaching of the Pearl of Parables, the father had not waited for the verbal confession of the prodigal son. He beheld the lonely figure a great way off; and before a single word had fallen from his lips, the tears of an undying affection were falling upon his neck. I said, *I will confess* . . .

and Thou, Thou *forgavest* the iniquity of my sin. *John Adams,* in *The Lenten Psalms.*

Blessed is he! An exclamation is often better than a description; a song is often more instructive than a sermon; and David could not have proved or explained the reality of his repentance in any other way so well as by this quick and joyous outburst of music. It is like the gleam of rosy light upon the western Alps; when we see it we know that the sun is risen. It is like an involuntary echo from the heart; when we hear it we know that God has spoken the word of peace. I had rather see a pardoned sinner show his happiness than hear him define his experience. *Dr. Henry van Dyke,* in the *Story of the Psalms.*

Shout for Joy, all Ye that are Upright in Heart. At a Deaf and Dumb Institution some time ago, the master said to all the children, "Write down on your slates what is the happiest thing." One child wrote "Joy"; the next "Hope"; a third, "Love"; another "Gratitude"; the next wrote down "Repentance." It was a little girl who wrote "Repentance", and there was a tear in her eye. Her teacher said: "My dear, this is not a happy feeling—how can you write down repentence as being the happiest thing?" she wrote, "I think it is—there is nothing so happy in the world as to be humble in God's sight." This is quite true. There is nothing happier than real repentance. *James Vaughn.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, 1 Jn. 1.8. Let us deal honestly with ourselves, and acknowledge to ourselves and to God the sins for which we need his forgiveness.

Our Prayer: Most holy and merciful Father, we acknowledge and confess in thy presence our sinful nature prone to sin and slothful in good, and all our shortcomings and offenses against thee. Thou alone knowest how often we have sinned, in wandering from thy ways, in wasting thy gifts, in forgetting thy love. But thou, O Lord, have pity upon us, who are ashamed and sorry for all wherein we have displeased thee. Teach us to hate our errors, cleanse us from our secret faults, and forgive our sins, for the sake of thy dear Son our Savior. (*H. Stobart,* in Dean Hodge's book "The Training of Children in Religion".)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Penitential Psalms: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

2. From sin to freedom from guile. See "The Clean Opposite", *Sunday-School Times,* Oct. 7, 1911; "Personal Power", *Outlook,* Sept. 9, 1911.

3. Why I believe in the forgiveness of sins. See "The Faithful Witness", *The Outlook,* Aug. 16, 1913, pp. 846-7. Contrast "Religious Penances", *National Geographic Magazine,* Dec., 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to look up. 1. What is the title of the Psalm in the Bible? 2. What does James 1.26 say about guarding one's words? 3. What do Rev. 5.8 and 8.3, 4 call prayer? 4. Look up Ps. 34.11; 39.1; Prov. 4.24 and commit to memory one of these verses. 5. What is the meaning of verse 6? (*Guide,* p. 263.) 6. What is the meaning of "Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol"? (*Guide,* ¶ 9, p. 263.) 7. Study Dr. Willoughby's interpretation of the Psalm. (*Guide,* p. 263.)

Questions to think about. 1. What clause of the Lord's Prayer is recalled by a clause in verse 4? 2. Who are "the righteous", verse 5? (*Guide,* p. 262.) 3. What ancient oriental custom is referred to in verse 5? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 263.) 4. What are the temptations mentioned in this Psalm? 5. What help in temptation does the Psalmist have? 6. Does temptation of some sort come to every one? 7. Is temptation (testing) a good thing for you? 8. What experiences with temptation did Jesus have?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory 1 Cor. 10.13, and Psalm 141. In your Life of David write Part X, David a Penitent. At the close write Psalm 32 from memory.

LESSON XII—JUNE 20

A PRAYER FOR THE TEMPTED (Temperance Lesson)

Golden Text

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me. Psalm 141.9

LESSON Psalm 141 MEMORIZE verses 3, 4

1 Jehovah, I have called upon thee; make haste unto me:
Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
2 Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
3 Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth;
Keep the door of my lips.
4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
To practise deeds of wickedness
With men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.
5 Let the righteous smite me, *it shall be* a kindness;
And let him reprove me, *it shall be as* oil upon the head;
Let not my head refuse it:
For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.
6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock;
And they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.
7 As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth,
Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.
8 For mine eyes are unto thee, O Jehovah the Lord:
In thee do I take refuge; leave not my soul destitute.
9 Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me,
And from the gins of the workers of iniquity.
10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
Whilst that I withal escape.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Make haste unto me.* Give a speedy answer to my prayer.

2. *As incense before thee.* Incense was offered daily upon the altar of incense. Revelation (5.8; 8.3, 4) speaks of golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and of an angel standing over the altar having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should add it unto the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God.—*The lifting up of my hands.* In invocation.—*As the evening sacrifice.* "Therefore this was the Evening Song of the early Christian Church. The calm floating of the fragrant cloud upward, the hands outstretched to God when the day's work is done, are a contrast to the morning prayer full of purpose and aim, like an archer who lifts his arrow to the bow, and then follows it to the mark, Ps. 5.3" (*Ker*).

3-4. *Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.* "Frequently in the Bible the 'lips' are the expression of the whole man. It is this conception that lies at the root of such a prayer as this. If God be the doorkeeper, then the whole house must be under his rule and authority" (*H. E. Lewis*). Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles, Ps. 34,11. See Ps. 39.1; Jas. 1.26; Prov. 4.24. The sins from which the Psalmist prays to be delivered (verses 3 and 4) have been called lip-sins, life-sins, like sins.—*Incline not my heart to any evil thing.* Bring us not into temptation, Mt. 6.13.—*Let me not eat of their dainties.* "Better a dinner of herbs out of temptation, than a stalled ox in it" (*Matthew Henry*).

5. *The righteous.* Whether this refers to God, or to righteous men, is not clear. "If it is the Lord who smites, then the Psalmist looks upon the Divine correction as marks of fatherly love; if a pious man, then his rebukes are the fruits of brotherly kindness" (*Plummer*). Faithful are the wounds of a

friend, Prov. 27.6. Some commentators take the words as spoken sarcastically of the wicked men who are persecuting the Psalmist; "They claim to have right on their side", says Davies, "and the Psalmist will accept the rebuke and chastisement of these men, for 'a jewel is a jewel in a swine's snout'. But what he prays against is the great wickedness of these men." Matthew Henry takes the more natural view and in his quaint way observes: His enemies reproached him with that which was false, which he could not but complain of; yet, at the same time, he desired his friends would reprove him for that which was really amiss in him, particularly if there was anything that gave the least color to those reproaches. Yet Matthew Henry's words recall Mark Twain's words, "I like criticism, but it must be my way"!—*Let not my head refuse it.* ."The oil of the wicked, let it not grease my head", is Dr. Brigg's translation. "The oil with which honored guests were anointed before the feast (Ps. 23.5), he will not accept such an honor from the wicked". Taking the reference to be to righteous men, Mr. F. B. Meyer observes: "It takes more love to smite than to comfort. We are each other's keepers. The breaking of the box on our heads may give us a momentary shock, but the ointment of Christian love is very sweet".—*Even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.* Or, *still is my prayer against their wickedness,* RVm. *Calamities* is the marginal reading for *wickedness.* "As it had been in the previous strophe against wickedness of themselves, in mind, lip, or deed" (*Briggs*). "Our best return for such love as the righteous show is to continue to intercede for them when their *calamities* (RVm) are multiplied" (*Meyer*).

6. It is difficult to understand the connection of this strophe. Dr. Briggs considers it a Maccabean addition which came into the text from the margin, and was an imprecation upon the Syrian governors and oppressors. Who "their judges" are we can not determine, but the words mean that when the judges are themselves judged ("thrown down by the sides of the rock" was a not uncommon way in which punishment was meted out), they will see that the Psalmists' words were right.

7. Dr. Briggs reads *their* bones instead of *our* bones, and thinks this strophe gives the result of the fall of the "judges": thrown down by the sides of the rock, their bodies burst asunder, as did that of Judas, Acts 1.18.—*Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.* If the Psalmist refers here to himself, he thinks of his sufferings as so great and as himself so near to death that he can speak of his death as already a fact. Sheol is the invisible world.

8. *His hope is in Jehovah alone.* Compare Psalm 25.15: Mine eyes are ever toward Jehovah; For he will pluck my feet out of the net. "Those that have their eye toward God may have their hopes in God" (*Matthew Henry*).—*Leave not my soul destitute.* Or, *pour thou not out my life,* RVm.

9. "It was a time of violence and rough handling. All around men breathed out hate. The ground was sown thick with snares and gins to entrap the feet of God's saints. Amid it all, the Psalmist kept his eyes fixed on God the Lord, and kept committing to him the keeping of his soul. Under similar circumstances Paul rose to a yet higher note. See Rom. 8.36, 37" (*F. B. Meyer*).

10. *Escape.* Hebrew, *pass over,* RVm. "To realize God's presence is the one sovereign remedy against temptation" (*Fénelon*). "Take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand" (*Paul*).

1-10. The meaning of several strophes is obscure, and the connection of one with the other is not in all cases self-evident. Dr. J. M. Willoughby gives this clear and consistent interpretation of the Psalm from one point of view:

It is a hymn for dark times. God's child in a difficult position will find David's prayer full of comfort. Deprived of accustomed means of grace, we can never be robbed of prayer, that which gives meaning and reality to every religious observance (1, 2). The dangers of adversity are two-fold; we may either rush into rash and foolish bemoaning of our condition (3), or we may in despair allow ourselves to become acclimatized to the evil around us (4). Better be reproved by the righteous; that can do nothing but good (5).

Wisely we may ponder how, after all, the many are misled by the few, and with the silencing of that few, the "judges" (6), their followers will readily listen to the word of truth. The case is an evil one, as bad as if nothing but the grave were left, and we as broken and helpless as the broken clods

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turned by the plough (7), but that very helplessness is our salvation, making us turn to him whose strength is made perfect in weakness, and faith is nourished by prayer till it demands nothing less than full victory (9, 10).

Lessons are to be learned in difficulties which we could never learn in the smooth and easy life we fain would choose: such a Psalm as this owes its existence to the depth of trouble driving the soul back upon God.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *Keep the door of my lips.* "The peace of man is in the keeping of his tongue" is an oft-quoted Arabic proverb. And another one is this: "Your tongue is your horse; if you guard it, it will guard you, but if it runs away with you, then you are lost!"

4. *Let me not eat of their dainties.* It has been suggested by Dr. Davis that there may be an allusion here to the Jewish laws of diet. A modern Jew, if strict, will eat only food that is *Kosher, i.e.,* pure according to Jewish law.

5. *It shall be as oil upon the head.* See ¶ 2, p. 184.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In what Psalm is there a reference to the anointing of the head with oil? What oriental custom does it indicate? What two Psalms have we studied this Quarter? Repeat one of them. What is the other one about? Who wrote the Psalms?

The Date of Psalm 141. The title of the Psalm is "An Evening Prayer for Sanctification and Protection. A Psalm of David." In regard to the titles of the Psalms see ¶ 2, p. 49 of our Introduction. It is clearly the prayer of one who is in trouble and needs to be kept from danger within and without. If from the pen of David, it could be ascribed to many a situation through which he passed.

In assigning this Psalm for today our Lesson Committee have evidently thought of it as especially a prayer of the tempted, a prayer of David after his sin had been brought home to him by Nathan and he had repented and been forgiven, that he might not again fall into sin.

Dr. Briggs takes another view. "It belongs," he says, "to the beautiful time of temple worship in the Persian Period subsequent to Nehemiah. The people are actually engaged in prayer in the Temple. They feel the need of protection from themselves in the evil that was within them, showing the high ethical sense of the late Persian period."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The Psalm befits the needs of the tempted. It is a prayer of which all have need, for "temptation is the one certainty, the one immediate certainty, before us all." Ponder Dr. J. R. Miller's words in a Letter to a friend:

If I were to give you what I believe is one of the secrets of my own life, it is that I have always loved people. I have had an intense desire all my life to help people in every way—in their personal experiences, in their struggles with temptations, their quest of the best thing, in character. I have loved other people with an absorbing devotion. If you want to have success as a winner of men, as a helper of people, as a father of little children, as the friend of the tempted and the imperiled, you must love them and have a sincere desire to do them good.

And here is President Wilson's message to teachers: No great nation can ever survive its own temptations and its own follies that does not indoctrinate its children in the Word of God, for the righteousness of nations, like the righteousness of men, must take its sources from these foundations of inspiration.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Although this Psalm is not for your pupils, it has for them helpful lesson truths. Tell them that when David felt tempted to do wrong he prayed to God and asked him to help him resist the temptation. Explain this by telling this story which a grandmother told a small girl (in "Child's Gem").

One day her father gave Nellie a dollar bill. "Take this to Bennet's bakery and get it changed into pennies," he said. Nellie took the dollar to the bakery, and when the man gave her a big roll in exchange she opened wide her eyes. This little girl was very fond of a candy called "juba-paste," made at the candy shops in that beautiful old city which was her home. She thought: "I could take just one cent and papa would never miss it out of all these." "You see, my dear, there was temptation to take what was not hers, to do wrong," said Grandma.

"Oh, did she take it?" exclaimed Maude with wondering eyes.

"I will tell you. She sat down on the white curb of the pavement and slyly slipped a penny out of the roll. She looked at the shining thing, then slipped it into her pocket. She pushed her handkerchief over it and stood up, saying to herself, 'Nobody will ever know.' Then she repeated, 'Nobody.' She could go no farther, for suddenly the words of her Sunday-school teacher came to her saying, 'God sees and knows everything.' She felt ashamed that God knew. At once the little hand went into the pocket, the coin was withdrawn and placed with the others, and Nellie went home glad that she had resisted the temptation which had almost overcome her. Do you understand now, Maude?"

"Yes, Grandma, and I'm so glad she resisted."

"Well, you see, dear, there is always a thought sent us showing the right way to resist the temptations which come to all of us," replied Grandma.

Call for the Golden Text. Talk about a Spider's web, the way it is made, the way the spider lies in wait, the silken line running from the web to her hiding-place, the coming of the fly, the struggle and the capture. That web is a snare for the fly. Saul fell into the snare of disobedience, and then into the snare of jealousy and anger and murderous thoughts, and even David fell into the snares of covetousness and murder. Other snares are given in verse three. Teach this verse, and talk about some of those snares—untruths, unkind words, cross words.

"What do you do when you want to say cross and naughty words?" a little girl was asked. "I shut my lips and eyes tight, and think a little prayer to Jesus to come and make me feel right," was her answer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. I have read a beautiful story about a little boy not yet two years old who was seated at the dinner table beside his father. Before him was a cut-glass dish. The brightness of the glass attracted him, and he reached out a hand for it. "No, no," warned his mother. He drew his hand back but the temptation was too strong for him, and he reached for it again. Again his mother warned him, "No, no." But he could not resist the temptation and seized the dish. His mother took it and put it down before him again, at the same time slapping his hands. The little fellow again put both hands upon the table and slid them slowly toward the coveted dish, then suddenly took away his hands and slipped them into his father's large hand. Then he smiled confidently up into his father's face as much as to say, "I know you will keep me from it."

What verses in our Psalm express the thought that the Heavenly Father will keep us from temptation to evil?

For Older Pupils. Interpret the Psalm, strophe by strophe. See "Words and Phrases explained."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. The Snare

The Psalmist's Prayer. The Psalmist is in fear of sin; not of sin in the abstract, but of specific sins, sins of the tongue, sins of evil practices; and he prays God to help him withstand those workers of iniquity who would tempt him to commit deeds of wickedness. His temper and his tongue were inclined to get the better of him when he thought of his oppressors, and without God's help he would lose control of himself. Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, he cries later, and though here he is seeking

protection from oppressors who are seeking to do him harm, let us apply his words to the workers of iniquity who would tempt to do evil.

Lose No Time in Getting away from the Snare. Once two young men came to Thodotus with the question, "What must we do in order to overcome temptations?" The old man turned to one of the brothers and said, "Pull up this young oak sapling." The youth did it with one hand. "Now this one!" said the old man, pointing to a larger oak. This, too, the youth accomplished, although with difficulty. "Now that one there!" But the youth exerted all his strength in vain, and in vain his brother tried to help him; the tree was too firmly rooted. "See, my sons," then said Thodotus, "there you have a symbol of your temptations. Would you gain the mastery over them, overcome them at the start."

Look Out!

There's just one law for the Scout,
The first and last, the present and the past,
And the future and the perfect is, "Look out!"
I, thou and he, look out!
We, ye and they, look out!
Though you didn't or you wouldn't,
Or you hadn't or you couldn't,
You jolly well must look out. *Kipling.*

The Only One who never Fell a Victim of Temptation's Snare.

What if or yet, what mole or flaw or lapse,
What least defect or shadow of defect,
What rumor tattled by an enemy,
Oh, what amiss may I forgive in thee,
Jesus, Good Paragon, Thou Crystal Christ!—*Sidney Lanier.*

II. The Snare-layers. Temperance Lesson

The Wily Tempter. The other day while returning home from a snow-shoe constitutional, reports Rev. J. B. McCullagh, I came across one of our Indians among the pines. He was kneeling on the snow, arranging a miniature lane of pine branches and twigs. I stood and watched him. After completing two little hedges, he constructed a small arch in the middle, and set up twigs on either side, leaving but a small opening in the centre. This rather puzzled me. "What is it you are making?" I inquired.

"I am making a snare for rabbits," he replied.

"But where is the snare?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't put the snare in for a couple of weeks yet," he said.

"Then what is the use of your present arrangement?" I demanded.

"Ha-ha! I first make the rabbits familiar with the environment," he said laughing. "They will come tonight and be very suspicious and wary of this. Next night they will come a little closer, and so on, until they find there is no danger. Then they will begin to nibble at these twigs," touching the arch in the center, "and then, when they start eating the twigs, I shall put in my snare, arranging it cleverly in the middle of this little arch, and then I shall catch a rabbit every night." "Well," thought I, "what a lesson!" and instead of my friend Joshua, in his green blanket hunting jacket and yellow fur cap, I seemed to see the great enemy of souls laying his snares and sins for the unwary. Familiarity with the environment of sin, the presentation of the idea, the parleying with the tempter, little beginnings—nibblings at the temptation, finally the snare put in cunningly, and then the soul caught.

Older Boys. A young boy likes to stand well with those older than himself. It is manly to be admitted to the intimacy of the young fellows about town. The boy says words which he would blush to repeat to his mother or sister, perhaps he takes what he would call "the glass of good fellowship." The others clap him on the shoulder and applaud his silliness. It pleases him to be considered their equal. Little he knows that the moment his back is turned, these same comrades who have caught him by the bait of popularity laugh at him as being a young fool. He has been merely their sport for an hour.

An old Scotchman, giving sage advice to a boy, once said, "Remember, laddie, those who laugh with you will later laugh at you." Keeping these words in mind will be good for a boy. When the lure of popularity takes on debasing forms such as those mentioned it is just as well to know that the end is not praise, but ridicule. *Editorial* in *The Wellspring.*

Snare-Layers in Mission Lands. We hear much about the temptation to intemperance which is put in the way of the natives of Africa. A recent number of the *International Review of Missions* gives most deplorable facts about the way in which the liquor traffic has grown in British West Africa and French West Africa. From other sources come encouraging statements. In Belgian Congo a new regulation of the Government came into force at the beginning of 1913, prohibiting entirely the sale of all distilled alcoholic liquors to the natives; also in Portuguese West Africa the sale and manufacture of spirits has likewise been prohibited in the Congo district of Angola. The duties on spirits imported into West Africa have been increased by Germany, France, and Great Britain. In British West Africa local distilling and the importation of distilling apparatus have been prohibited, while in Southern Nigeria it has been decided to substitute a silver currency for the pernicious currency in gin.

An Unwitting Snare Layer. To Dr. James Buckley in his early pastorate a woman came one day and said, "I have a son approaching manhood. He smokes cigars and says that you are only four years older than he is and if it is right for you to smoke, it is right for him." After a minute's thought Dr. Buckley said to her, "Please tell your son I do not smoke." "He told me he saw you smoking yesterday and he never told me a falsehood since he was born." Dr. Buckley answered, "Yes, I used to smoke, but since you have told me this, I have quit it forever."

III. Keep me from the Snare

The Defensive Armor at our Command. Nothing in Nature is more remarkable than the way in which animals and plants are fortified against their enemies; and it is noted that the defensive armor of imperiled creatures becomes more complete and exquisite as the weapons of their assailants may happen to increase in power and efficiency. Cacti are preserved by formidable thorns and spines from destruction by the wild quadrupeds of the deserts. Protective mechanics of a most complicated order are found in a number of plants which would otherwise be endangered and perhaps entirely destroyed by the attacks of ravenous snails and similar destroyers. All kinds of ingenious weapons are developed by flowers, insects, and animals—just the armor that best suits them being finely adjusted to the severity of their environment.

Neither has God left us without a "whole armor"; it would be most unlike him if he had. Yet, alas! we often neglect to fortify ourselves, and venture into a dangerous world with sandals, sword, helmet, or breastplate missing. With unpardonable levity we are unwatchful and unready, although standing in jeopardy every hour. If the cactus in the desert carelessly dispensed with its spines, it would probably perish by some browsing beast; if the wild rose dared for a season to bloom without its thorns, cattle would make short work of it, and the bird or butterfly that in caprice omitted its protective color, would most likely furnish a feast for its foe. Yet how often are we guilty of such conduct, by default of prayer, vigilance, and discipline bringing ourselves into infinite peril! *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in *Sermon upon Presumptuous Sins.*

Support us on Every Leaning Side. Someone gained a good lesson from a Southern prayer-meeting. A colored brother asked the Lord for various blessings—as you and I do—and thanked the Lord for many already received—as you and I do; but he closed with this unusual petition: "And, O Lord, support us! Yes, support us, Lord, on every leanin' side!" Have you any leaning sides? This humble man's prayer pictures them in a new way and shows the Great Supporter in a new light also. He is always walking by the Christian, ready to extend his mighty arm and steady the weak one on "every leanin' side."

Brave Fighters. Think of the dim multitudes who are fighting temptations more grinding and persistent with far feebler strength than yours. Think, for such are still left in the world, of those who prefer a life of exhausting poverty

to daily opportunities of compromising with honesty or selling their purity for gold. Think of the men, and they can be found in every city, who when the law had freed them from all obligation to pay their creditors, have as fortune came back to them used her favors to pay every one of their former debts, though it meant a life of hard labor instead of one of comfort and ease. Think of the women, you will find them, too, in every great city, who are battling for themselves and their children on a few shillings a week against temptations that say, Yield to us and we can give you food and clothing enough for them and you. Holding out! What starved garrison, that marched from its inviolate fortress with all the honors of war and to the admiration of its foes, ever deserved half the glory, or for our hearts was charged with half the inspiration which thousands of tempted souls deserve and can afford to us, who hold the fortresses of their lonely lives against the devils of dishonesty and greed and lust. *Dr. George Adam Smith,* in *The Forgiveness of Sin.*

Fly the Flag of our Victor. In a certain large steel work a big muscular Scotchman called "Striker Jones" held the position of boss-striker. Nearly all the men in his department were hard drinkers, and he was not an exception to the rule. But a change took place. He became a Christian; and when pressed by his fellows to take a drink he refused. "I shall never take a drink ony mair, lads," he quietly said, "na drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God." And they said, "Wait a bit, till the hot weather comes—till July. When he gets as dry as a gravel-pit he will give in. He can't help it." But right through the hottest months he toiled on, the sweat pouring in streams, yet he never seemed to be tempted to drink.

At last the time-keeper of the mill spoke to him as he was giving in his time. He said, "You used to drink a good bit. Don't you miss it?"

"Yes," he said, very emphatically.

"How do you manage to keep away from it?"

"Well, just this way. It is now ten o'clock, isn't it? Well, today is the twentieth of the month. From seven till eight I asked that the Lord would help. He did. And I put a dot down on the calendar right near the twenty. From eight till nine, he kept me, and I put down another dot. From nine to ten he has kept me, and now I gie him the glory as I put down the third dot. Just as I mark these dots I pray—'O Lord, help me; help me to fight it off for another hour'."

That's the fighting spirit for temptations. Will you mark as keenly as you ever marked anything that there must be two factors on the winning side in that fight? There must be a determined will, and there must be alongside the Man who was tempted in all points as we are, and who never failed, and who never fails. Let it be said very plainly that neither one is enough without the other.

He will put new life and strength into one the very moment the determination is decided upon. And so, bit by bit, sometimes in a way that seems slow, but very, very surely, the new strength comes into the will. And so through the choice to resist the wrong and do the right, our victorious Fellow-Man breathes new strength in, and gives us the enormous advantage of his victory and of his presence. *Condensed* from *Quiet Talks about the Tempter,* by *S. D. Gordon.*

A Sure Help in Meeting Temptations. He who faces his life—who faces one day of life—without prayer shall be like one who fights with an unbeaten foe on his rear as well as one in front of him. But he who follows his Lord and, making prayer the real battlefield of his life, overcomes there his passions, his fears, his entanglements with evil and the other temptations that beset him, shall move like his Lord unencumbered and unharassed to the nobler issues of life, and achieve them, in choice and deed, simply and easily.

Do not think that in all this I am pressing upon you anything sensational or exaggerated: anything that is beyond your daily duty or the needs of your daily health. You know, if you are awake, what is in front of you: what calls, what burdens, what possible bearing of pain and disappointment. You know what distractions are certain to come your way towards these; what besetting sins you have; what temptations are ready to harass and weaken you. Give yourself a little time to realise these alone with God. Summon them to his Presence; summon them by their right names. Consider their severity, their

danger, the power of death to your character, which lies in them. Lay to your heart, as Christ did, the awful difficulty of doing your Father's will in face of them. And then in the full sense of all this, grapple with their power over you. Resolve to overcome them; and by Christ's own promise you shall overcome them and then and there; and you shall move through the rest of your life, not untempted indeed, but unencumbered by the baser and more irritating of such enemies, and with much of your Master's peace and power about you. *Dr. George Adam Smith,* in *The Forgiveness of Sins.*

Pray for the Tempted. How is it with the prodigal population of our land? We pray for them, but do we pray from beneath their burden? Have we "borne their griefs and carried their sorrows"? A sainted woman in my church so identified herself with the women drunkards in her city that when she arose in our prayer meeting she prayed as though she herself were one of them: "God pity us when the passion is upon us; when our flesh burns like a fire may thy grace keep our spirits cool and strong. When the taint blows out from the open door, and the devil leaps upon us like a lion from the thicket, Lord, in thy pity, help and save us." Not "them", mark you, but "us". She became incorporated with the burdened women and prayed from beneath their load. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in a *Sermon.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Our Prayer: O God Eternal, and Eternally Just and Righteous, we thank thee for the cleansing of the statutes of many of our States from all complicity with the traffic in strong drink.

We thank thee that already a majority of the people of the Republic have thrown about their homes and firesides such legal protection as is offered by existing laws. But since this monster knows no law, nor holds sacred any fireside, nor any age or sex, nor heeds the voice of any community, nor the rights of any States, but rages on, defying all restraints, while his jaws ever drip with the blood of the innocent, as well as the guilty, we cry to thee, our loving God, for deliverance.

This prayer is not ours only. It is the tearful, despairing plea of thousands of women who are overwhelmed with shame and dying under their burdens; it is the wail of millions of children whose sensitive hearts bear endless taunts of poverty and disgrace as drunkards' children. It is the heart-breathing of fathers and mothers who have seen the wreck of fondest hopes that says Amen to this our united petition.

And now, O God of Battles, inspire every heart for the warfare ahead. Strengthen our hearts, guide our counsels, revive our courage to meet the shock of battle. Millions of prayers, millions of voices, millions of money we pledge for the defense of our inalienable rights against every destroyer of pure loves, of happy homes, of manly virtues and loyal citizenship, but not one vote, nor one voice, nor one dollar as tribute to any party or power that would allow all these to be ruthlessly bartered to any interest under any guise of temporizing expediency. Let this our mutual pledge be written under our united appeal.

O God of our fathers, God of our homes and our loved ones, God of our liberties and our beloved country, that we may honorably claim thy help in this our holy enterprise, we bring to thee this our petition in the name of him who bade us to love thee with all our hearts and minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves. (*Condensed* from a *Prayer* by *Bishop Earl Cranston.*)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Overcoming temptation. See "Comfort in Temptation", p. 54 of "Listening to God", by the Rev. Hugh Black.

2. Taking away from the weak the temptation to intemperance. Ask the members of your class to inform themselves upon the progress of temperance in your State.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Assign whatever work is necessary to prepare for next Sunday's review.

LESSON XIII—JUNE 27

REVIEW—DAVID, THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

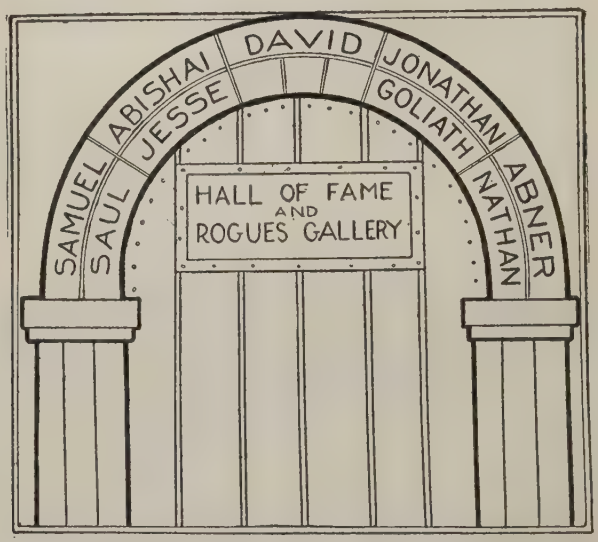
Golden Text

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. Ezekiel 34.15

READ Psalm 78.65-72

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

Have the diagram below drawn upon the blackboard with the names omitted from the arch. Upon the other end of the board write the headings, "Chief Persons", "Chief Facts", and by questions secure the answers below, writing them after they have been given. After the two columns have been filled, ask for names to write upon the door of the "Hall of Fame and Rogues' Gallery", and call for the reasons which entitle each name to a place there.



Chief Persons.	Chief Facts.
1. Samuel, Saul.	A Great Disobedience.
2. Samuel, Jesse and Seven Sons, David.	A Great Anointing.
3. Jehovah.	A Great Psalm.
4. Saul, David, Goliath.	A Great Champion.
5. Saul, David, Jonathan.	A Great Jealousy.
6. Saul, Jonathan, David.	A Great Friendship.
7. David, Abner, Abishai, Saul.	A Great Clemency.
8. David, Men of Jabesh-Gilead, Tribes of Israel.	A Great King.
9. David.	A Great Procession.
10. David, Uriah, Joab, Bathsheba, Nathan.	A Great Rebuke.
11. The Psalmist.	A Great Forgiveness.
12. The Psalmist.	A Great Prayer.

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Before class time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each circle should be covered by a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

If you have drawn a picture each week, as suggested, your pupils will enjoy them and the talks about them all the more because they are familiar.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Lesson I. Two men are talking earnestly together for a long time. Now I catch these words: Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. Who was it said this? To whom was he speaking. What had the latter done that was disobedient? How was he punished?

Lesson II. Here there are many men and boys,—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten in all. One of them, an old man, is looking at the younger men very thoughtfully, one after the other. Now he is talking with an older man. One of them is going away. The others seem to be waiting. Here comes the one who went off, and there is a boy with him. Who are all these people? Why did Samuel look at the young men so closely? What did he think at first when he saw the oldest? Who is the boy that comes last of all? What did Samuel do to him?

Lesson III. Beautiful scenes of a shepherd caring for his flock I see. What do we call the Psalm that compares our Heavenly Father to a good shepherd? Who are the sheep? What does he do for them? How do the sheep regard him?

Lesson IV. A king and a young man are together. Something heavy and shining is being put upon the young man. The youth walks off slowly. Now he stops and comes back. He is taking something off. Now he is walking along by a brook. He stoops to pick up something which he puts carefully away in his bag. How small the youth looks beside the man who is coming toward him, who is the largest man I ever saw. Who are the two men I saw at first and what is being put upon the younger man? Where was he going? Who was the big man? What did he brag he would do? What did the young man do? How did he do it?

Lesson V. This is a pleasant scene. A man is playing upon his harp, and another man is listening. Suddenly the man who is listening raises his hand and hurls something. What did he hurl? At whom? What happened? Where did David go? How did he escape from the city? Why did Saul wish to kill him?

Lesson VI. A young man is striding away from a table where others are eating. He looks much excited. Now he and a boy are out in a field. He shoots an arrow and the boy runs after it. The boy is going away now with all the arrows. Now the boy has gone and another young man has appeared on the scene. Who is the first young man? Why did he leave the table so suddenly? Why did he shoot the arrow? Why did the boy go away? Who is the other young man? What did the two young men do and say?

Lesson VII. It is night time. Many soldiers are sleeping on the ground. Here come two men toward them creeping along slowly and quietly so as not to awaken the sleepers. One of them bends over and takes something, and now they are going quietly away. Here the man is again, on top of a mountain. He is calling to some one far below him. Who is the man? What did he do when he went among the soldiers? What might he have done instead? Was Saul his friend or his enemy? How did Saul learn that David had spared his life?

Lesson VIII. I see a large company of men, women and children traveling along the road. There are many pack animals with them, heavily laden. The scene changes, here there are multitudes of people, but there is one man toward whom all are looking. Something is being poured upon his head, and now all are bowing down before him. In the first scene, who is going to Hebron with his family and his men and their households? Why is he going there? In the second scene, who is the important man? Who has come to see him? Why?

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep.
EZEKIEL 34·15
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
FORGIVEN!
XII
WHEN TEMPTED PRAY

Lesson IX. What a long procession I see! There is dancing and music and singing and great rejoicing. At the head of the procession four men are carrying what looks like a large box. What is it? Where are they taking it? What king is with them and is very happy? Can you repeat any of the words that they are singing?

Lesson X. A battle scene. From the top of a wall men are shooting arrows at others below who are shooting upward. Here there is a house of mourning, for a man lies dead who was killed in that battle. Now it is a palace that I see. A man is talking, and now he points his finger at the man who is listening. The latter hangs his head in shame, and tears run down his cheek. Who is the man who has been talking? What story has he been telling? What did he say when he pointed his finger at the other man? Who was that man? Why was he ashamed and sorrowful? How had he caused the death of that man in battle?

Lesson XI. A horse is being driven along. What is in his mouth? How is he guided? Why is he not told where to go instead of being pulled this way and that? Sometimes people are like the horse; in what way?

Lesson XII. A man is kneeling in prayer. It is the man whom we have seen in all our lessons except the first one. Who is he? He is praying to be kept from yielding to temptation to do wrong. Did he need to pray for this help? Do we?

QUESTIONS FOR AN ORAL REVIEW

Instead of asking these questions, they may be written one each upon a slip of paper (as many slips for each question as the number of your pupils) and the answer may be written beneath in class. Give out additional slips with new questions as they are called for.

For Younger Pupils.

1. What man made a good start as king but ended badly?
2. What did David do as a lad?
3. In what two arts was he skilled as a boy?
4. How did he make use of one art for his country?
5. Of the other for the king?
6. What relation was David to Ruth?
7. How was David treated by Saul?
8. How did David treat Saul?
9. How did he gain his kingship?
10. What did he do with the ark? Why?
11. How did Nathan rebuke David and how did David receive his rebuke?
12. What does Psalm 32 say about the blessedness of forgiveness?
13. What does Psalm 141 say about temptation?
14. In what places have we seen David during the quarter's lessons? Locate each city.
15. What kind of man was Saul in appearance? David?
16. How did Saul find out that he was to be king?
17. How did David find out that he was to be king?
18. What is the best thing our lessons have told us about Samuel?
19. What is the best thing our lessons have told us about Saul?
20. What is the best thing our lessons have told us about David?
21. What is the best thing our lessons have told us about Jonathan?
22. Why are all great friends sometimes called David and Jonathan?
23. What two men talked together across a deep ravine?
24. Who was loyal to his king?
25. Who was loyal to his friend?
26. Who was loyal to his country?
27. What adjectives apply to Saul?
28. What adjectives apply to David?
29. What adjectives apply to Jonathan?
30. What adjectives apply to Nathan?

For Older Pupils.

1. What are the chief incidents in Samuel's life?
2. How did Saul fail to control himself?

3. What did Samuel tell Saul was of more importance than religious forms?
4. What are the chief incidents in Saul's reign?
5. What was David when he was anointed by Samuel?
6. How was David brought to Saul's court?
7. What positions did he hold during Saul's reign?
8. What was he when Saul died?
9. Of what tribe was he first king?
10. How long did he have to wait before being made king of all Israel?
11. Why did every one like David?
12. What king gave David a town to live in, and where was it?
13. Name the people who stood by David in trouble.
14. What reasons for jealousy might Jonathan have had?
15. How did Jonathan use his position as king's son to help David?
16. How did David show his loyalty to God after he had made Jerusalem his capital?
17. What plan did he have for showing his loyalty which he was not permitted to carry out?
18. How did Jonathan show great nobility of character?
19. How did David show great nobility of character?
20. What was David's last tribute to Saul?
21. Repeat David's words to Goliath in which he relies upon God's help.
22. Why did the Philistine princes object to David's going with them to battle?
23. What kind deed of a people was requited long years after?
24. If in need of comfort, what Psalm would you recall?
25. If struggling with temptation, what Psalm expresses the prayer you need to offer?
26. When rejoicing in Divine forgiveness, what Psalm would express your feelings?

QUESTIONS UPON THE LESSON TRUTHS

1. What lesson shows that God judges not as man judges? What Bible verse tells the difference between the two judgments?
2. Of what lesson was this the Golden Text: If God is for us, who is against us? Who is the hero of that lesson? What qualities do you admire in him in those scenes?
3. When did David show great tact? What men proved themselves good citizens at that time? How did David show great patience?
4. Tell the parable by which Nathan rebuked David for his sin. What was David's prayer?
5. By what lesson was the wickedness of vengeance shown? By what lesson was generous treatment of an enemy shown?
6. What lesson is about a great friendship? What must one do to deserve a friend? Who is the greatest Friend whom you can have? How should you treat that friendship?
7. What lesson teaches that religion should be joyous? What words speak of God's sovereignty over all the world?
8. What Psalm is about the tempted? What does it teach that one should do when tempted?
9. What lesson shows the contemptibleness of putting the blame which one deserves upon others? What other great truth does that lesson teach?
10. What Psalm teaches the lesson of trust in God? What other lessons does that Psalm teach?
11. How is the blackness of jealousy shown? How is the terribleness of lack of self-control shown?
12. How general is the need of forgiveness? What is the way to forgiveness? What words of what Psalm show the blessedness of forgiveness?

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOKS

1. From what Books are our Quarter's lessons taken?
2. How many chapters are there in First Samuel?
3. How many chapters are there in Second Samuel?
4. How many Psalms are there?

5. Who are the heroes of First Samuel? Of Second Samuel?
6. What stories about David are told in First Samuel?
7. In what Book of the Bible is the story of David as King told?
8. Where in the Bible will you find the story of David and Goliath?
9. What is the number of the most famous of all the Psalms?
10. What Psalm was sung by the Levites when the ark was brought to Jerusalem?
11. Repeat the Psalm which breathes the spirit of perfect dependence upon God and of perfect trust in him.
12. Where in the Bible will you find the story of the friendship of David and Jonathan?
13. Where will you find Nathan's parable?

(For review questions upon the Books of Samuel see p. 125; upon Psalms, p. 253.)

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW

For Younger Pupils.

1. The names of all the characters in this quarter's lessons and a fact about each.
2. A great friendship.
3. A great day in a lad's life.
4. A great day in a king's life.
5. A story about Saul.
6. A story about David.
7. A story about Jonathan.
8. Nathan's Parable.
9. The Shepherd Psalm.
10. The Psalm of the Blessedness of Forgiveness.

For Older Pupils.

1. The last years of Saul's reign.
2. David's life before he became king.
3. David's life after he became king.
4. An appreciation of Jonathan.
5. Saul and Jonathan contrasted.
6. David as shepherd, champion, fugitive, poet, and king.
7. The Books of Samuel.
8. The Psalter.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is said in 2 S. 14.25, 26 about Absalom's appearance? 2. What personal grudge did Joab have against Absalom? (2 S. 14.28-33.) 3. How did Absalom win his following? 4. Tell the story of David's flight from Jerusalem. (2 S. 15.13-16.14.) 5. How was Absalom, who was so skilfull in deceiving others, himself deceived? (2 S. 15.32-37; 16.16-19; 17.5-14.) 6. Psalm 41 is entitled. "The Psalmist in Sickness Complains of Enemies and False Friends": what strophe is applicable to Absalom's treatment of David? (9.) 7. In what city was David? (*Guide*, p. 280.) 8. Where was the forest of Ephraim? (*Guide*, p. 280.) 9. What became of Absalom's body? (2. S. 18.17.) 10. What monument had Absalom erected to perpetuate his memory? (2 S. 18.18.) 11. What brother of Absalom later imitated him in his pretensions to the throne? (1 K. 1.5-6.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What does "Thou art worth ten thousand of us" mean? 2. Why did David give the charge recorded in verse 5? 3. Who were "the people of Israel", verse 7? 4. Who were "the servants of David"? 5. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 8? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 277.) 6. How was Absalom suspended? 7. How did the "certain man" regard Joab? 8. Why did Joab kill Absalom? 9. If Absalom had seen his wickedness and had returned to his father repentant, would David have forgiven him as did the father of the Prodigal Son? 10. What is said about Jesus' attitude as a youth toward his parents? (Lk. 2.51.)

Memory Work. Commit to memory Longfellow's poem entitled "The Chamber over the Gate."

THIRD QUARTER

LESSON I—JULY 4

ABSALOM'S FAILURE

Golden Text

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Ephesians 6.1

LESSON II Samuel 18.1-15 MEMORIZE verse 5

And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2 And David sent forth the people, a third part under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. 3 But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us neither if half of us die, will they care for us; but thou art worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succor us out of the city. 4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gateside, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. 5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. 7 And the people of Israel were smitten there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men. 8 For the battle was there spread over the face of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and earth; and the mule that was under him went on. 10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. 11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *pieces of* silver, and a girdle. 12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *pieces of* silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. 13 Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his life (and there is no matter hid from the king), then thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me. 14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. 15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *And David numbered the people that were with him.* See the Historical Background. The word *numbered* seems to have here the meaning of *mustered:* he organized his army and reviewed it.—*Captains of thousands and captains of hundreds.* The usual military divisions.

2. *Under the hand of.* Under the leadership, command of.—*The Gittite.* Native of Gath.—*I will surely go forth with you myself also.* David proposed being commander-in-chief of the army.

3. *Thou shalt not go forth.* So David's followers protested on another occasion, 2 S. 21.17.—*But thou art worth ten thousand of us.* "A common es-

timation of a valued leader." The Hebrew text has, *for now there are ten thousand such as we,* RVm.—*Be ready to succor us out of the city.* From Mahanaim David could send reinforcements and in case of defeat his reserve force in the city could protect them from the pursuers.—*The city.* Mahanaim. See p. 280.

4. *What seemeth to you best I will do.* The king submits, he will await at Mahanaim the issue of the battle.—*By the gateside.* See p. 278.—*By hundreds and by thousands.* "These ancient names for divisions are perhaps here used indefinitely, just as the modern 'company' may vary largely in number" (*Wood*).

6. *The people went out into the field against Israel.* David's army made the attack upon Absalom's.—*The rest of Ephraim.* See the Geographical Background.

7-8. *The people of Israel.* Absalom's army.—*The forest devoured more people than the sword devoured.* The forest seems to have been a sort of jungle, and this statement may mean either that they fell into swamps and over cliffs that were hidden by the trees, or as Kirkpatrick suggests, that owing to the nature of the ground more were slain in the pursuit though the forest than in the actual battle.

9. *His mule.* Perhaps David's own mule, on which only royalty could ride. See ¶ 7, p. 285.—*Oak.* Or, *terebinth,* RVm.—*His head caught hold of the oak.* Became wedged in the fork of a branch. It is from Josephus that the tradition comes that he hung by the hair of his head. See Prov. 30.17.—*The mule that was under him went on.* Leaving him suspended from the tree. Some of these terebinths have such low branches that one can not stand upright beneath them.

11. *And, behold, thou sawest it.* These words were evidently spoken scathingly.—*Ten pieces of silver.* About seven dollars, perhaps equivalent in purchasing power to one hundred dollars.

12. *Though I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand.* "If I were to feel the weight of the money paid into my hand" (*Driver*).—*Beware.* Hebrew, *Have a care, whosoever ye be, of* etc., RVm.

13. *His life.* Another rendering is, *my life,* RVm.—*Thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.* He knows Joab's unscrupulous nature, and knows that Joab would have freed himself to the king by putting all the blame upon him.

14. *I may not tarry thus with thee.* The conversation is not pleasing to him and he puts an end to it; he has, moreover, no time to waste, for there is need of haste or Absalom will be freed from his predicament.—*Darts.* Or, *staves,* RVm. "Since the Hebrew word used means elsewhere *rods* or *staves,* and the wounds inflicted were not at once mortal, it seems that Joab struck Absalom brutally with pointed wooden staves, the first weapon which came to hand, in fact, in a kind of way impaled him as a traitor, and left his squires to give him the *coup de grace* (*Kirkpatrick*).—*Through the heart.* Yet the young men slew him, verse 15. "Not literally through the heart, but into the midst of the body" (*Kirkpatrick*).

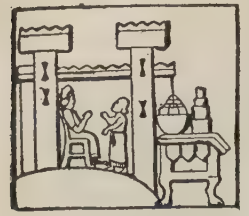
15. *And slew him.* This murder of Absalom was necessary, Joab thought, for the safety of the kingdom. Joab was fiercely loyal to David in this act, but he was a vindictive man and he may have been actuated also by a desire for personal revenge, for Absalom had set fire to Joab's grain and compelled that imperious general to do his bidding, 2 S. 14.28-33. Though Joab had "turned not after Absalom", he did turn some years after this after Adonijah when he organized a rebellion against Solomon, and was put to death as a traitor.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. S. 15.1. *Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.* It had not been settled which one of David's sons should be his successor, for the law of primogeniture had never wholly prevailed in the East, and by assuming the royal state Absalom laid claim to the throne. Such signs of luxury and pomp had been unknown hitherto in Israel.

2. S. 15.1. *And Absalom rose up, early, and stood beside the way of the gate.* The Eastern city gate has always been the public meeting place for the people.

It was at the gate that traders met and judges dealt out justice. The King transacted business in its shade or at the gate of the palace. At Constantinople, the Sultan's palace is entered through an arch called the "Sublime Porte", or Majestic Gate; in the Middle Ages ambassadors were received there with stately oriental pomp.



Court of Justice in a Gateway
From an Assyrian Obelisk

It was in the room between the two gates that David sat to await the news of the battle between his forces and those of Absalom. When he learned of Absalom's death he rushed up the stairway to the chamber over the gate, above this lower room, to give way to his grief. It was on the roof above this upper chamber that the watchman stood when looking for the coming of the messenger from the battle.

2. S. 18.20. *Thou shalt not be the bearer of tidings this day, because the king's son is dead.* When the Manchu governor committed suicide at Kingkiang during the Revolution of 1912, no one was willing to carry the message to General Ma, for it was customary to order the bearer of evil tidings put to death. Doctor Mary Stone undertook the hazardous mission. When General Ma learned that this brave Chinese woman was in charge of a hospital and training-school, he was so surprised and pleased that he promised to help her work as soon as his country was at peace.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

Review Questions. In our First Quarter's lessons we heard about sons who proved a disgrace to their father. Who were they? What did their father say when told that his sons should die for their sins? Where was the father when news was brought him of their death, and what happened? One of the reasons which the people gave Samuel for their wanting to have a king concerned his sons: what was it? When Saul went out against the Ammonites, how did he arrange his forces? Whom has Joab murdered at the command of David?

Trouble between David and his Son Absalom. Amnon, the son of David's wife Ahinoam, basely wronged Tamar, the daughter of Maacah, David's only wife who was a princess, but David, instead of punishing him, merely rebuked him. Absalom, Tamar's brother, determined to avenge her, glad at the same time, perhaps, to put out of the way the elder half-brother who might succeed to the throne which he had resolved should be his. He waited two years, and then at a feast to which he invited all his friends had Amnon slain when half drunk with wine. To escape the consequences of the deed, he fled to his grandfather, the King of Geshur. Here he remained three years. Through the efforts of Joab, he was recalled. Joab used the same art that Nathan had used when he convicted David of his guilt; through a "wise woman of Tekoa" he obtained from the king a judgment on a fictitious case which committed him to the recall of his son. David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but refused to see him. After two years of such treatment, Absalom compelled Joab to intercede for him, and he was restored to the king's favor.

Absalom's Conspiracy. After Absalom was restored to his father's favor, he began a systematic course of treachery to arouse dissatisfaction with his father's government, and to win the people to himself, purposing when the time was ripe to seize the throne. During the next four years, he showed the people what a magnificent king he would make by assuming the royal state, driving forth in a chariot with fifty men to run before him. He made it his practice to rise early every day and stand by the gate to court the favor of those who came with their suits to David for judgment, by showing great interest in each one. He would not allow the customary obeisance, but kissed them all as his friends. In these ways he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Absalom planned for a simultaneous uprising against the king throughout the country. First he asked and obtained David's permission to go to Hebron to pay a vow there, which he claimed to have made when in exile at Geshur. He invited two hundred of the chief men of Jerusalem to go with him to offer sacrifices to the Lord, and they "went in their simplicity," not knowing what he

purposed doing. Ahithophel, David's trusted counselor, joined him. Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the kingdom to announce that at the sound of the trumpet Absalom would be king. The conspiracy grew.

David's Flight from Jerusalem. Absalom's plot was disclosed to David; taken by surprise, he saw no hope except in flight. With his household and his Philistine body-guard of six hundred men and accompanied by Joab his general, Abishai, Joab's brother, and Ittai the Gittite (who had steadfastly persisted in following his king's fallen fortunes despite David's urging that he turn back to Absalom), David left his capital, crossed the brook Kidron, and ascended the Mount of Olives. Zadok and Abiathar the priests started with the ark, but David bade them return. Hushai, also, his trusted counsellor, David sent back to the city, bidding him gain the good will of Absalom and then report to him (David) through the priests and their sons what was being done.

Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth came and represented that Mephibosheth, ungrateful for all the king's kindness to him, had decided to remain in Jerusalem, hoping to gain his father's throne. As the sad-hearted king went his way toward the Jordan, Shimei, a man of the house of Saul, followed along the hill above and threw stones and dust at him and cursed him, for his treatment long ago of the sons of Saul. Abishai wished to slay him, but David said that his own son was seeking his life, "how much more may this Benjamin now do it?" And he would not suffer him to be harmed.

Absalom in Jerusalem. Absalom meanwhile made a triumphal entry of Jerusalem and was anointed king. Ahithophel counselled that a force be sent after David at once, before he had time to collect his forces, but Hushai, acting for David's interests, counselled Absalom to wait till he himself had a very large army, for David's prowess in warfare was well known. Then Hushai sent secret messengers to David, who was encamped in the plain of the Jordan, urging him to cross the Jordan. David advanced to Mahanaim, where the East Jordan tribe rallied to his support. Absalom adopted Hushai's plan, thinking to add to his glory by a magnificent attack, and Ahithophel, realizing that Absalom thereby lost his golden opportunity, committed suicide rather than suffer the results to himself of his treachery to King David.

The Battle: Death of Absalom. When Absalom had mustered a large force he crossed the Jordan to make the attack. How he met his death is the theme of our lesson.

David's Grief. Absalom's death ended the rebellion. There remained only the sending of the news to David. Ahimaaz the son of Zadok wished to carry it, but Joab told him that the news of Absalom's death would be no welcome news, and sent a certain Cushite instead. Ahimaaz persisted in his request and was allowed to go. He outran the Cushite and reached David first.

In the early morning David had taken his place in the gateway of the city, and watched his troops march forth to meet his son's troops in battle. All day long he had sat there awaiting the result. His throne, his kingdom, the villainy of his son, were all forgotten in his anxiety for the safety of Absalom. Above on the roof over the gateway, a watchman was stationed. Toward night he called down to the king that a runner was coming. If alone, the king said, he was a messenger with tidings of the battle, for a fugitive would be accompanied by many others. Another runner was seen in the far distance. The watchman's sharp eyes then announced that the running of the first one seemed like that of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest. Joab would not send so distinguished a messenger with bad news, the king thinks. "All is well," called out Ahimaaz from afar, and then when he reached the king's presence he made obeisance and continued: "Blessed be Jehovah who hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king." David scarcely heard and in no way heeded his words. "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" was the only news he cared now to hear. Eager as Ahimaaz had been to be the first to bring the tidings, he was loth now to answer the king. There was a tumult when he left, he said, but he knew not what it meant. "Stand aside," said the king, as the second runner, the Cushite, appeared. "Jehovah hath avenged thee this day," exclaimed the Cushite, but David only questioned again, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Then he learned the truth, Absalom was slain. Like David we forget the treason

and rebellion of Absalom as we see his father with an exceeding bitter, pathetic cry, go up to the chamber over the gate to mourn for his son. "O my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Geshur in Syria, where Absalom had been in exile, was north of the Yarmuk River and east of the Upper Jordan. Hebron, where Absalom collected his forces, was eighteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. See p. 228. The city to which David had fled, from which his troops went out, was Mahanaim in Eastern Palestine, between the Yarmuk and the Yabbok rivers.

The Hill Country of Ephraim lay west of the Jordan, but the forest of Ephraim, where the battle took place, was evidently east of the Jordan, between that river and Mahanaim. "Why should it be thought unlikely that the name Ephraim should have crossed the river and fastened on the eastern bank?" questions Dr. George Adam Smith. "In the course of the history of one tribe, especially in the days of the Judges, a hundred adventures were likely to occur to cause the Ephraimites, who so frequently passed over, to leave their name behind them when they went back. Or a colony may easily have settled there. And, in fact, we do read of Ephraimites settling in Gilead in such large numbers that the western Ephraimites call the Gileadites fugitives from Ephraim (Judges 12.4)."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

And the King said unto the people . . . But the people said . . . And the King said unto them . . . And the King commanded, saying . . . And a certain man said . . . And Joab said unto the man . . . And the man said unto Joab . . . Then said Joab. Each of these statements is followed by the direct words of the speakers. Change the text by putting the direct speeches into indirect, thus: And the king told the people that he would go with them, but the people said that they did not wish to have him, etc. You find that the account has lost all of its vividness and forcefulness and much of its interest. Apply this principle of direct speech wherever possible in the illustrations which you use to enforce your teaching.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Study 2 S. 14.25-26; then chapters 15-18, the Historical Background and The Light from Oriental Life. Begin with a word picture of Absalom. Show Tissot's picture No. 88. Describe him as he rode about in his chariot, or sat at the gate and told the people what he would do for them if he were king. Describe an oriental scene in a gateway. Tell about the gathering of troops at Hebron, the march to Jerusalem, the flight of David across the Jordan, the rallying of his warriors at Mahanaim, King David's desire to lead his troops, and the affectionate solicitude of his people. Follow the lesson of today with the account of the bringing of the news of Absalom's death to David, and of David's sorrow. Show Doré's picture of David Mourning for Absalom, Wilde No. 486. There is abundant opportunity throughout this story of Absalom to let first one and then another of the characters speak, and thus the story will be made vividly interesting and real to your pupils. The right telling of the story will be all you will have time for, and it will teach its own lesson, for the beautiful truth of the father's great love for his son, and the baseness of the son's treatment of his father, will make a deep and lasting impression upon their minds.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Rebellious Sons and Parental Responsibility

David's Weak Treatment of Absalom. In the aftermath of Absalom's rebellion we see David's love for his son was so great that he would have

forgiven Absalom's attempt to undermine his father's position on the throne, his treason, his taking up arms, all and everything, if only his life might have been spared. And in David's bitter cry on learning of Absalom's death, we see that love and grief so possessed the father's soul that the King's heart forgot all about the fate of his country and his people. But did Absalom in his lifetime realize how his father loved him? Evidently not. David's treatment of Absalom had been thoroughly weak. When he allowed Absalom to return from Geshur whither he had fled after killing his half-brother Amnon, David said that he might return to his own house, but he himself would not see him. For two years Absalom lived at Jerusalem without seeing the king. David neither punished Absalom for his crime nor restored him to favor. He recalled him without receiving any sign of repentance from him, and then irritated him by excluding him from court. All this time the narrative allows us to see that David "mourned for his son every day" while he was in exile, and after he returned he "longed to go forth unto Absalom," but of this Absalom himself knew nothing.

David's treatment of Absalom and his subsequent grief over his death were paralleled recently by a father in New York who had his son sent to the Reform School on Blackwell's Island, and paid no attention to letter after letter which the boy wrote him begging for forgiveness and promising to live uprightly if his father would bail him out, and then, when the boy attempted to swim away from the island and was drowned and the body was brought to his father, the father who had really loved him all this time, swooned and died.

"Father Does It". The study of the child is good, and its education of supreme consequence. But are we not in danger of overlooking the importance of educating parents? Every generation vast numbers escape the influences of school and Church, and grow up to found homes in their own image—selfish, sordid, without ideals or principles. These are the homes that nullify half our efforts. We pull one way on Sundays, and they pull the opposite way on the other six days. We preach idealism and sacrifice, and they practise short-sighted greed and the doctrine of each man for himself. We urge the boy to follow Christ, to restrain his passions, to honor the Lord's Day, and the home practically says do none of these things. The father is the boy's chart, and the mother is the girl's compass. What the parents practise the children ultimately copy. *Editorial* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

II Filial Disobedience

Absalom's Baseness. It seems almost incredible that Absalom could so long and deliberately strive to undermine his father's reputation and regard among his people, and then resort to arms to gain the throne for himself. When King James IV of Scotland was a boy, he took up arms against his father, and his manhood was made bitter with remorse for the deed. In penance he wore beneath his outer garments an iron belt, and every year he added to it an extra weight, to remind him that his remorse should only increase with the years. Absalom was slain by Joab, but had he lived there is no probability that he would have repented. His dark deeds were so deliberately planned, and their execution so long in the carrying out, that his baseness was evidently a part of his nature, not a sudden, hasty act. He is an example of all a son should not be.

Absalom's Tomb

In the Valley of the Kidron below Jerusalem there is today a stone monument forty feet high which the Jews call the Tomb of Absalom. No Jew passes it without throwing a stone against it and exclaiming, "Cursed be the memory of Absalom and cursed be every child who rises up in rebellion against his parents." Notice the large hole that has been made through the face of the Tomb, into which stones are now hurled.

Children, Obey Your Parents in the Lord, for this is Right. In his life

of his mother, James M. Barrie writes: "Everything that I could do for her I have done since I was a boy. I look back through the years and I can not see the smallest thing undone." Is not this a beautiful thing for a man to be able to say of the way he has honored his mother all his life?

III Independence Day

Independence or Solidarity. Our lesson is about Absalom's disobedience to his father, disloyalty to his king, and dishonor to his country, but as today is the Fourth of July we may well talk a few moments about what the day means to us, what it has stood for, and what it still stands for.

An editorial in a recent number of the Youth's Companion speaks of the change that has come with the years in the Fourth of July Speeches:—

Politically, independence is an old story to the United States. When it was new, and glowing still with the heat in which it was forged, of course our fathers exulted in it; of course they made an annual holiday of the Fourth of July, and glorified it with bands, and orators, and salutes, and fireworks, and processions. And still we keep their holiday much as they did. But we do not really exult in independence any more. We do not have to, and indeed this generation of us would hardly know how—so powerful is our nation, and so entirely secure is it from even a shadow of compulsion from without.

And so the Fourth of July has come to be modified and broadened in spirit. We no longer give our sole attention on our political birthday to the glory of our political birth, but give most of our thought to what has happened since, and much to what is going to happen, and what we may hope to do about it. Patriotism is our topic on this day, and that has come to be a British drum-beat kind of topic on which the sun never sets.

For we are not a country apart. Europe has come to live with us, and Africa has come, and Asia is not unwilling to share in what we have; and our birthday concern is how to make all our various family live together; the light with the dark, the poor with the rich, the new with the old, the uneasy with the easy. Where our Fourth of July orators once spoke of independence, now they are likely to speak of solidarity; the dependence of one on another; the interdependence of our great mass of people.

That is our great problem today—how we can all live together, individually free, collectively harmonious, active and progressive. It is a problem of our own hearts, our own laws, our own resources, to be worked out at home, and yet so closely related to experiments with the same problem in all other countries that patriotism today has come to be a sort of world religion; and he who would greatly serve his own state finds himself enlisted in the service of all humanity. *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

The End of the Fourth. The Fourth was nearly over, and there was an hour to spare before catching the car which would bring them in town when the heat was somewhat lessened. It was a time which actually comes to boys once in a great while, when it was a pleasure just to lie on the grass and do nothing. There they were, stretched out in various attitudes—the fourteen of them. Their teacher, Robert Langdon, was near the center of the group.

"I've been wondering, fellows," he began, "how many of you can tell me offhand, what this day commemmorates?" It looked like an easy question, and at least half a dozen spoke at once, "Independence." Mr. Langdon smiled. "How many can improve on that answer?" "Declaration of Independence?" Two or three put the answer as a question.

"Right," Mr. Langdon said. "See the difference? Declared independence before they had it. What had to come before it could be really a possession?" The boys were thoroughly interested now, and the reply came spontaneously, "A lot of fighting."

"True enough," the teacher agreed. "It's one thing to declare, and a mighty fine thing to do it, too, but it takes a lot of fighting to make good the declaration. Boys, our country's freedom is settled, thanks to those who declared and fought, and so, year after year, we observe this day. That job is off the list; but it comes to me that there are a good many declarations of independence which might be made today. Think of any?" The boys looked rather blank.

Mr. Langdon went on, "Pretty much everybody has some bondage he would

like to shake off if he only had the grit to strike the blow. Even young chaps like you may know something in the way of habit that ought not to enslave you. Maybe it's slang, maybe it's laziness, maybe it's cigarettes, maybe a disposition to deceive, maybe rudeness to mother and the girls, maybe carelessness in dress, or worse than these mentioned; there are any number of things it isn't best to let get hold of a fellow, because they stick like burs. What do you say to spending five minutes in thinking up our special enemies—I'm not counting myself out. I know what mine is—and making our own private declarations."

The boys settled back, most of them with very serious faces, many closed their eyes, and five minutes of perfect silence followed. Then Mr. Langdon called, "Ready! As many as have made this personal declaration, raise the right hand." Every hand shot up.

"Now, fellows, you remember what followed that other declaration. It will follow yours. You'll have to fight to make good, maybe years, as they did, but let there be no deserters, and you'll win. Let me tell you, there's One who will gladly help you, One who, when he wanted to do a hard thing, 'steadfastly set his face.' The time may come when you'll need also a human hand. Here's mine. Now, we haven't a liberty-bell handy, but we might raise a cheer for our own special declarations." And they did. The teacher looked at his watch. "Who'll race me for the trolley?" *Helen A. Hawley,* in *The Baptist Teacher.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

God has given you the love and care of your parents, and you owe them your love and obedience in return, obedience granted, not grudgingly, but wholeheartedly, and love lavished loyally.

A father still loves his child, no matter how wayward and wicked he has become. Is the young man Absalom safe? cried David in an agony of suspense and anxiety. Are you in anyway needlessly causing your father uneasiness, if not anxiety? Will the course you are pursuing make you "the glory" or "the gloom" of your father's old age?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. "The best safeguard of a young man is a perfectly open and affectionate relation to his parents."

> "'Is the young man safe?' when our laws condone
> The 'Thou shalt nots' on the slab of stone?
> 'Is the young man safe?' let the Church and State
> Heed David's cry at the city gate."

What shall be done, for example, with the boys under thirteen who were arrested recently in New York, one of whom was caught stealing apples, and the other three of whom attacked the policeman savagely, with the avowed purpose of doing something sufficiently lawless to entitle them, when a little older, to membership in a notorious gang of thugs, thieves and gun men, known as the "Hudson Dusters"?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Whom did David answer, verse 28? 2. Where was Adonijah holding his feast? (*Guide,* p. 287.) 3. Where was Solomon anointed? (*Guide,* p. 287.) 4. Who were the Cherethites and Pelethites? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 285.) 5. How were mules valued by the Israelites? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 285.) 6. Read all that the Bible says about Adonijah. 7. Who spoke the words of our Golden Text? 8. Read Psalm 72 entitled, "The Reign of the Righteous King. A Psalm of Solomon".

Questions to Think About. 1. Why was it not understood which son was to succeed to the throne? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 286.) 2. How does David show his excitement and emotion? 3. Why did David specify Judah, verse 35? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 284.) 4. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 36? 5. Do you think that David liked to hear Benaiah's wish, given in verse 37? 6. Do you think that Saul would have liked to hear one of his officers express the wish that Jonathan might be greater than Saul? 7. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 40? 8. When did another Son of David ride through the streets of Jerusalem sitting on an ass and accompanied by shouting people?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of David write Part XI, David in his Old Age.

LESSON II—JULY 11

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING

Golden Text

Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. I Chronicles 28.9

LESSON I Kings 1.1-2.12: verses 28-40 printed MEMORIZE verses 39, 40

28 Then king David answered and said, Call to me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. 29 And the king sware, and said, As Jehovah liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, 30 verily as I sware unto thee by Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; verily so will I do this day. 31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did obeisance to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

32 And king David said, Call to me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. 33 And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: 34 and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel; and blow ye the trumpet, and say, *Long* live king Solomon. 35 Then ye shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah. 36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: Jehovah, the God of my lord the king, say so *too*. 37 As Jehovah hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39 And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the Tent, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, *Long* live king Solomon. 40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

28-30. *Answered.* Nathan's remonstrance, verses 15-17. *As Jehovah liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity.* "To the God who has been true to me, and delivered me wonderfully out of so many and great dangers, will I also remain true unto the end. His oath, coming from deep emotion, is likewise a praise and thanksgiving unto Jehovah" (*Lange*).—*Assuredly Solomon shall reign after me.* To understand the situation as to the successorship, read ¶ 5, p. 286.

31-34. *Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king.* How far a cry it is to the early simplicity of the monarch!—*Beniah the son of Jehoiada.* He was in command of the Cherethites and the Pelethites, verse 38: see 2 S. 20.23.—*The servants of your lord.* The mighty men of verse 8, and the Cherethites and Pelethites of verse 38.—*Cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule.* No one save the king himself might lawfully ride the king's own mule, hence this act was itself a declaration to the people that Solomon was king. Compare Esther 6.8, 9, and 2 S. 13.29. See ¶ 7, p. 285 and ¶ 5, p. 287.—*Gihon.* See p. 287.—*Anoint him there king over Israel.* See ¶ 6, p. 286, and compare the anointing of the British King at his coronation, ¶ 2, p. 288.

35. *Come up after him.* Follow him in formal procession as his bodyguard from Gihon to Zion.—*He shall be king in my stead.* David lived but a short time after Solomon was made king.—*Prince.* Or, *leader,* RVm.—*And over Judah.* David had first ruled over Judah alone; the old jealousy between Israel

and Judah had broken out with Absalom's rebellion and again with Sheba's rebellion (2 S. 19.40-20.26), and now Adonijah was likely to head a like rebellion—he had especially invited Judah to his feast (verse 9)—hence David expressly declares that Solomon shall be king over both Israel and Judah.

36-37. *Amen.* An expression of assent, so let it be.—*Jehovah, the God of my Lord the king, say so too.* May Jehovah confirm the words of my lord the king, *Septuagint Version.—Even so be he with Solomon.* "God himself can promise no higher blessing than his presence".—*Make his throne greater.* "He knew that no one having a true father's tenderness could be jealous of his child" (*Theodore*). "Whether the seventy-second Psalm be David's composition or that of Solomon, it doubtless expresses the aspiration with which the dying father looked forward to the reign of his son; it expresses the ideal of earthly monarchy" (*Geikie*).

38. *The Cherethites and Pelethites.* Foreign soldiers who formed the nucleus of David's army, 2 S. 8.18. A bodyguard of foreign extraction like the Prætorian guard of the Roman Emperors or the Swiss guards of the French kings. The former are mentioned in 1 S. 30.14 as living in the Negeb (the South, the district south of Canaan), and it is thought that the word Pelethites was a corruption of the Hebrew word for Philistines.

39. *Took the horn.* Compare Ex. 30.22-33. The horn was probably a ram's horn, pointed, and fitted with a stopper at the broad end.—*Oil.* The high priest anointed Solomon to his office as king by pouring the oil over his head, a symbol of the coming of the Spirit of Jehovah upon him. Compare the anointing of David, lesson II, Second Quarter. The anointing oil was always kept in the Tabernacle (Ex. 31.11). The oil was composed of the best spices—myrrh (the gum of Arabian thorny shrubs); cinnamon (from India); fragrant cane (the lemon grass of India); cassia (the bark of a coarse kind of Indian cinnamon); and olive oil (Ex. 30.23-33.)—*The Tent.* Probably the one constructed by David on Mount Zion for the Ark of the Covenant, 2 S. 6.17: the Tabernacle constructed by Moses was at Gibeon, 1 Ch. 16,39.—*And anointed Solomon.* His second anointing is recorded in 1 Ch. 29.22.

40. *The earth rent with the sound of them.* An instance of oriental hyperbole. "It is suspected that there is a slight corruption in the Hebrew text, and that the verb really used meant 'resounded'". "We should rather speak of the air than the earth: compare 'their hideous yells rend the welkin'" (*Phillips*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

31. *Bowed with her face to the earth and did obeisance to the King.* Thus she offered the same reverence to the King that worshippers today offer in Mohammedan mosques and Russian churches, when they touch the floor with their foreheads.

33. *Cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule.* Mules are not heard of in Israelitish history before the time of David, and in David's lifetime the use of mules seems to have been restricted to the royal family or to distinguished persons. Common people used asses, and the war-horse was not used before Solomon's time. To ride in the chariot or on the beast which carried the king was a special mark of honor. Pharaoh honored Joseph by causing him to "ride in the second chariot which he had," Gen. 41.43, but David's object was not so much to honor Solomon as to let the people know by this means that Solomon was to be his successor. The rabbis say that "it was death to ride on the king's mule without permission." Herodotus tells us that in Persia one who sat even by accident in the king's seat was immediately put to death.

40. *The people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy.* "The pipe was one of the most ancient as it was one of the simplest, of instruments. It was originally merely a reed with holes perforated at certain distances, whence is derived its Hebrew name, *chalil, bored through.* As its use became more general it was made with greater care, and sometimes of other materials, such as brass, box-wood, horn, bone, or ivory."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the first king of all Israel? Who first anointed him and under what circumstances? When was he anointed king in

the presence of the people? Who was the second king of Israel? Under what circumstances was he first anointed? Over whom did he first rule? How many years later was he made king of all Israel? About what date did David reign?

The Aftermath of Absalom's Rebellion. After the end of Absalom's rebellion, David returned to Jerusalem. On his homeward march, Shimei, who had cursed the king as he fled from Jerusalem, came to David and received pardon, and Mephibosheth came to explain that he had been loyal to his king, but his servant had deceived him. Barzillai, who had provided for David and his retinue at Mahanaim, went with him on his way as far as the Jordan, and when David besought him to come with him to Jerusalem he pleaded his age and begged that Chimham might have the honor in his stead. "All the people of Judah and half of Israel" met their king and escorted him over the Jordan. A strife arose between Judah and Israel, which ended in the revolt of the men of Israel under Sheba. On reaching Jerusalem David ordered Amasa to pursue Sheba. Joab treacherously murdered Amasa, led the troops against Sheba, and besieged the town of Abel. He agreed to leave the city if given the head of Sheba, and this condition was fulfilled.

Adonijah's Rebellion. David had now become old and feeble, and Adonijah, his oldest son, attempted to seize the throne. The fate of Amnon and of Absalom had no warning for him; like them, "he exalted himself, saying, I will be king." One of the explanations given for Adonijah's rebellion is that "his father had not displeased him at any time, saying, Why hast thou done so?" Like Absalom, Adonijah assumed the royal state, with his horses and chariots, and like him, too, he was goodly to look upon. Joab, the General, and Abiathar, the Priest, deserted David and espoused the cause of Adonijah. Adonijah gave a great feast at En-rogel, at which his followers shouted, "God save King Adonijah!"

Nathan informed Bathsheba of these doings of Adonijah and Bathsheba reported them to David, reminding him that he had promised that Solomon, her son, should be his successor. Nathan followed and confirmed her report. Then David solemnly swore to Bathsheba that Solomon should succeed him.

In order to understand the situation we must remember that neither precedent nor law was firmly established so as to settle the royal successorship. Saul and David had been elected by the people. The law of primogeniture would give the throne to Adonijah, and it seems from Adonijah's words in 1 K. 2.15 that the people had looked upon him as the rightful heir. David, on the other hand, claimed the right to choose his successor. "The eyes of all Israel are upon thee," said Bathsheba to him, "that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord and king after him."

The Anointing of Solomon and the Fate of Adonijah. David realized that prompt measures must be taken to assure the throne to Solomon, and he gave explicit directions for Solomon's immediate installation. His orders were carried out; the trumpet blast pealed forth the proclamation to the assembled troops, who shouted back, "Long live King Solomon!" and all the people came back to the palace rejoicing. Adonijah and his guests heard the trumpet blasts and the uproar in the city, and their feasting quickly ended. The son of Abiathar brought them word of what had taken place. The guests all fled, and Adonijah took refuge in the sanctuary and caught hold of the horns of the altar. To Solomon, who had been borne in triumph to the palace and seated on the royal throne, Adonijah's resolve was brought, that he would not leave his position till Solomon swore to spare him. Had Adonijah been successful in his plans, no doubt he would have put Solomon and Bathsheba both to death, but Solomon magnanimously gave his word that as long as Adonijah behaved worthily, he should not perish. Adonijah came and bowed himself humbly before his younger brother, hailing him as king.

Solomon dismissed him from the Court. But later, when Adonijah desired to marry the beautiful Shunammite, Abishag, Solomon said, "Ask for him the Kingdom also", for it was a recognized rule that the successor to a king became the possessor of his harem. Solomon could not brook Adonijah's subtle attempt to establish himself as the rightful claimant to the throne, and ordered Benaiah to slay him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In the Kidron Valley, which separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives on the East, there are today two springs called the Virgin's Fountain and the Well of Job. The Virgin's Fountain lies in a cave about a thousand feet south of the southeastern angle of the Temple Area. Its waters flow southwest through the famous rock-tunnel to the Upper Pool of Siloam, at the mouth of the Tyropœan Valley. This is believed by the majority of scholars to have been *Gihon,* where Solomon was anointed king. The word *Gihon* is derived from a verb which means *to burst* or *bubble forth,* and the Virgin's Spring is intermittent. Standing here among the rubbish at the foot of the bare hill and looking across to the squalid huts of the village of Siloam, on the east, it is not an impressive spot, but in the time of Solomon it must have been a fitting amphitheatre for the solemn ceremony.

Adonijah, meanwhile, was holding his feast at the other spring in the Valley of the Kidron which is about a thousand feet farther down, where the Valley of the Hinnom joins it on the west, and it is known as the Well of Job. It is one hundred twenty-five feet deep; near it is a ruined mosque. The location of En-rogel is in dispute, but Dr. George Adam Smith and other scholars believe that it was this Job's Well, or some fountain that has now disappeared. While Solomon was being anointed King, Adonijah was feasting by the stone of the Zoheleth, which is beside En-rogel. Gihon and En-rogel were sufficiently near to allow those at Adonijah's feast to hear the noise of Solomon's jubilant return to Jerusalem, but not near enough to allow them to see what was going on at Gihon. They did not know what had occurred until messengers came and told them, 1 K. 1.41-46. Josephus says that the Spring near which Adonijah feasted lay in the King's paradise or garden, and that it was at the mouth of the Valley of Hinnom.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Begin by showing a picture of Solomon, Wilde No. 487. Describe his life at his father David's Court. His mother, Bathsheba, wanted him to follow his father David as King of Israel, and David promised her that Solomon should be the one of all his sons that should be king after him. David was old and feeble, and not likely to live long, and Adonijah, another son, thought this was the time for him to be made king in his father's stead. Describe Adonijah, tell about the way he took to win others to him, picture him at the feast in the Kedron Valley, at the Spring of En-rogel, his followers shouting, "Long live King Adonijah!" Then tell about the excitement in David's house when word was brought that Adonijah was going to be king; give the words which passed between Nathan and Bathsheba, and then between Bathsheba and David, the coming of Nathan and his words to the King, the words that followed between David and Bathsheba, and David's quick orders. Describe the procession that left the city gate and went down to the spring below the city hill, the ceremony there, and the joyous return. Then tell your pupils what were David's words to Solomon and explain them.

Emperor William of Germany has a pew in a church in a beautiful village among the hills in Southern Germany. Near by is Zoller Castle, which used to be the home of the family to which the Emperor belongs. In that pew these words are written: "I and my house, we will serve the Lord." That is what Emperor William is doing, for he is a true Christian. And that is what President Wilson is doing. Is it what we are doing? Is it just as necessary for boys and girls to know and serve God as it is for kings and queens? Call for the Golden Text. Talk about ways in which your pupils may serve God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the royal stables at Jerusalem there were horses and mules and chariots. There were mules which were for the king's sole use, no one else might ride them without the king's permission. Does this seem strange to you? Over in Japan today there are large black oxen which are kept for the purpose of drawing the funeral cars of the dead Japanese Emperors. Oxen of special breed have been kept for centuries for the sole use

of the imperial family. There are beautiful cream-colored horses which came from Hannover and belong to a special breed reserved for the British royal family. There was a time when George III would not use his cream-colored horses in the London stalls because an enemy was using others like them. When Napoleon occupied Hanover in 1804, he seized all the cream-colored horses in the royal stables and took them to Paris. The state carriage at his coronation was drawn by eight of these animals. Then George III was so insulted and angry that until the fall of Napoleon he used only black horses. When David was too old to reign he let the people know that Solomon was King in his stead by causing Solomon to ride upon his own mule. It was all done in a great hurry, the making of Solomon king. Why?

For Older Pupils. The anointing of British Kings and their investiture with the ensigns of kingly power, have remained unchanged throughout many generations. As King and Queen enter Westminster Abbey and pass down the nave to the altar, the choir of the Abbey sing an anthem taken from Psalm CXXII. The King and Queen are seated and the Archbishop of Canterbury cries: "Sirs, I here present to you King ———, the undoubted King of this realm! Wherefore, all of you are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?" And the roof reverberates with the loud response: "God save the King! Long live the King!" while drums roll and trumpets pierce the air.

Then follows the litany, for the King must present himself to God with a plea for mercy on his lips and a prayer for God's grace to prepare him for his office. "He is to be crowned, not by national right, but by the grace of God." The communion is administered, and a brief sermon delivered, and then kneeling and kissing the Bible at the altar, the King takes the oath to govern constitutionally and to preserve the Protestant religion. The King moves into the coronation chair, which dates from the coronation of Edward First; between its legs is shelved the stone of Scone, or the stone of Destiny, on which the rulers of Scotland were crowned before Edward brought it here in 1296.

The Dean of Westminster lifts from the altar and passes to the Archbishop a golden vial (ampulla), shaped like an eagle with outstretched wings, and a small golden spoon, both dating from the twelfth century, and pouring a small quantity of oil from the eagle's beak into the spoon, the archbishop traces a cross with it on his Majesty's head as the organ of his thought and speech; on his heart as the seat of his emotions and affections; on his hands as his instruments of action, saying as he does so: "Be thy head, thy heart, thy hands anointed with holy oil as kings, priests and prophets were anointed, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost!"

Ampulla

When the King has been put in possession of the regalia, he is crowned. During the crowning, the great choir bursts out with the words: "Be strong and play the man, keep the commandments of the Lord thy God and walk in his ways." Then the sound becomes deafening. Every voice repeats over and over again, "God save the King!" Trumpets flourish; the drums again roll, and a salute comes from the historic Tower.

During this account of the crowning of the British King, you have been recalling, I am sure, the scene in Jerusalem about 2900 years ago when Solomon was King. Several parts of those ceremonies—anthems, music, acclamations, even the anointing, have descended from the ceremonies at the accession of Solomon, the first hereditary king to sit on the throne of Israel.

Golden Spoon Used at The Anointing of The King of England

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Royal Inheritance

Solomon's Heritage. Solomon's task as king was obvious. As David's successor he entered on a rich inheritance, all he had to do was to preserve what David had established and to strengthen it. His foreign policy must be to maintain the extraordinary predominance that Israel had won: at home he had to render permanent the unification of the tribes that David had accomplished, and bind Israel to the house of the great king.

This last Solomon was not able to accomplish. He, himself, however, as far as we can see, seems to have had strength and ability enough to maintain the position that Israel had reached. David's kingdom remained in his hands, if not uncontested, yet substantially unimpaired, and although he was not able, or else was not concerned, to keep the tribes of Israel contented under his scepter, there was no outbreak so long as he himself lived. The only attempt at an uprising of which we hear—that of Jeroboam—was vigorously suppressed. However great the desire of the northern tribes to withdraw from the house of David may have been, they did not attempt to emancipate themselves from the powerful scepter of Solomon.

Solomon did not attain the greatness of his father. Brought up as a king's son, without the opportunity or the necessity of steeling his will in the hard school of danger and self-denial, he was also destitute of his father's energy and originality. He was more interested in the privileges of the throne and its comforts, than in its lofty duties and mission. The despotic tendencies which, in the case of his father, appeared only occasionally, and were always restrained or suppressed, became, in the case of the son, a fundamental trait of character. His chief interest was in costly buildings, foreign wives, and gorgeous display. *R. Kittel,* in *A History of the Hebrews.*

Accepting a Hard Lot. Prince Wilhelm of Wied had a magnificent villa which his princess had made the center of the German artistic and musical aristocracy. He was in the German army where he was loved and where he might aspire to a very high and responsible position, and was leading a life of comfort and ease which only his high sense of patriotism made active and busy. All this he abandoned for a life of perpetual anxiety and busy responsibility. Count Berchtold, Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, told him that his acceptance of the new throne of Albania would finally set Europe at rest and he responded to the call of duty. The very difficulty of the task of governing the Albanians appealed to him. All his friends urged him to refuse the offer, but he replied: "When a Wied is called by duty he obeys, despite the consequences." When Emperor William of Germany congratulated him on his coming accession to the throne of Albania and expressed the hope that his reign might be happy and calm, Prince William replied, "It is getting more difficult every day to reign." The Kaiser responded with a melancholy smile. "I know that", he said.

King William of Albania took up his duties at Avlona, the provisional capital, with the feeling that the time might not be very long between his accession and abdication. Long live the King!

II Spiritual Inheritance

Know thou the God of thy Father. In David's address concerning the Temple, and his final charge to Solomon and the people, he said to Solomon: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. And further he said: Be strong and of good courage; fear not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah God, even my God, is with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee." This was the best heritage that Solomon received from his father David.

"I want to be like Mother". It is from the father and the mother that the child gets its ideas of life, and therefore of religion; of goodness, and

therefore of God. What to the child is meant by "Our Father in Heaven" depends on what the father on earth has been to him. What is meant to the child by "As one whom his mother comforteth," depends on what the mother has been to him. A little child playing on the nursery floor, picked up its father's collar which had fallen from the dressing-table and held it up to the mother, saying, "See Papa's damn". The wise mother that evening, as the father was dressing for dinner, handed the child the father's collar and asked him to tell the father what it was. He repeated the same phrase, "Papa's damn". Thus the father learned that he was teaching the child at two years of age profanity. The child at two years of age is equally ready to learn either profanity or prayer, whichever the parent chooses by his example to teach. Children are rare, instinctive, and indiscriminating imitators.

If the parents have derived their ideals of life and character from the life and character of Jesus Christ, if they have imbibed his spirit and are endeavoring to live his life, if from Christ they have derived their idea of their heavenly Father and what their companionship with their heavenly Father may be, if the sincerity of their consecration to a Christlike God is shown by the endeavor to live a Christlike life, their children will begin by endeavoring to follow their father and mother, and will end by following the leader whom their father and mother followed. They will grow into consecration as they grow into an understanding of their parents' divine purpose and their parents' experience of divine companionship. This is to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

A young girl once came to me, as pastor of the church, seeking admission. I asked her the common question, "Do you wish to be like Christ?" She answered with simple sincerity, "I don't know; but I wish to be like mother." It was enough; I was glad to admit her to the church. She took the ideal life which was next to her, and it was an ideal which led her to desire the Christian life and the Christian fellowship.

Be what you wish your children to become. Live as you wish your children to live. By your life set before your children the ideal which you wish them to realize, and let them grow naturally into a manhood and womanhood like your own; and so into a knowledge of God, and obedience to God, and fellowship with God, because you know him, obey him, and live in fellowship with him. *Condensed from Letters to Unknown Friends,* by *Dr. Lyman Abbott.*

What is your Father's God to you? The question at once arises, Does this faith in our father's God mean to us today as much as it meant in an earlier generation? Your father had a God. Can your children say as much of you—that you, too, had a God? How far are you helping to perpetuate this spiritual heritage? Are your children learning to associate their faith with the life of the home?

I would appeal not only to parents but to children, to young men and women growing up within the home. What is your father's God to you? With this spiritual heritage which you have received, what are you doing? *Condensed* from *The Religion of the Threshold,* by *Dr. Donald Sage Mackay.*

III Serve Him with a Perfect Heart and with a Willing Mind

Solomon's Service. David himself had served his God with loyal faithfulness. To do God's will had been the ruling principle of his life.

> I delight to do thy will, O my God;
> Yea, thy law is within my heart.

Will Solomon his son obey his counsel, and serve God with an equally perfect heart and willing mind? We see him today as he ascends the throne with the most brilliant prospects before him; next week we shall see him asking God to give him wisdom in his great office; two weeks later, he is dedicating the Temple which he has built with so much zeal—in all these scenes he seems to be following the counsel of his father David But alas, other scenes follow. At the close of his reign we find him serving false gods.

When Serving God is a Delight. Two things are connected with the

pleasure which lawyers have in their calling. There are two terms which are constantly used. I ask what a young man is doing, and I am told that he is *studying* law. I ask the same question a few years later, and I am told he is *practicing* law. These two things belong in the delight of the man of the law and are essential to its permanence. It is not enough that one should have a collection of law-books, should occasionally read in them, should admire very many things which they contain; but he must make a patient study of the law, and faithfully apply its principles to the interests of men. Grant me these two things, and I will promise a true delight in the law of the Lord.

We find the love of the law by taking it from Christ. It is expressed in his life, it is spoken by his lips. Hear Christ teach the law. Mark the tone of his voice, the accent, the emphasis. See the radiance of his face. Mark the grace and truth which are upon him, and the love of the law will spring readily in your heart. You will see its beauty, feel its attraction, and will be ready to say with the old singer, "O how love I Thy law!" *Alexander McKenzie.*

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US

What is the best heritage that we can pass on to those that come after? This, that when we are gone, they can think of us as Solomon could of David, knowing Jehovah was our God and that we served him with a willing mind. Then our lives may be the means of leading them also to loyalty to him whose we are and whom we serve.

Our Prayer: We pray that this day may be lived in the knowledge of thee, Heavenly Father, in the conscious effort to serve thee with a perfect heart and a willing mind. May we walk as King's sons, valuing so highly our relationship to thee as our Father that we shall not do anything unworthy of thy children. Hear us, Father, as we pray for thy people everywhere. May the knowledge of thee and of thy son our Lord Jesus Christ be brought to everyone, both in our own land and in foreign lands, and hasten the day when all shall know thee and love thee and serve thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Books of the Kings. See the Introduction to this Guide.
2. The modern parallel to David's failure to publicly make known his successor long before his time, is a man's failure to make his will.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What rivals did Solomon put to death after he was made king? 2. Where was Gibeon? (*Guide,* p. 295.) 3. What is meant by "the great high place?"? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 292.) 4. Where were the Ark and the Tabernacle at this time? (2 Ch. 1.3-6.) 5. What does 1 S. 28.6 tell you was expected in those days from dreams? 6. Read what is said about wisdom in the eighth and ninth chapters of Proverbs. 7. What is said about Solomon's wisdom in the last part of 1 K. 4.29-34? 8. Look up the references in the Subject-Index of your Bible under *Wisdom, to be sought for,* and *Wisdom, blessings attending it,* and select several Golden Texts for this lesson.

Questions to Think About. 1. What does Solomon mean by his words about himself in verse 7? (*Guide,* p. 293.) 2. What do Solomon's words in verse 8 about the population of his realm mean? 3. Why are the verbs of verse 12 in the perfect tense? (*Guide,* p. 293.) 4. What words of Jesus in the sixth chapter of Matthew are recalled by verse 13? 5. What instance of dreams with a meaning are recorded in the patriarchal history? 6. When did Lot make a bad choice? 7. If you were asked the question that Solomon was, what would be your answer? 8. Do you have the opportunity of making such a choice as Solomon's? 9. What did Jesus once say about asking and receiving? 10. What great contrast is there in the characters of David and Solomon? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 295.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Proverbs 3, 13-18. Begin a Life of Solomon and write today, Solomon Anointed King.

LESSON III—JULY 18

SOLOMON CHOOSES WISDOM

Golden Text

The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 9.10

LESSON I Kings 3.4-15 MEMORIZE verses 9, 10

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; 12 behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any rise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

4. *Gibeon.* See p. 295.—*That was the great high place.* Although the ark stood in a temporary tent on Mount Zion, Gibeon is called the chief high place because it held the Tabernacle, the ancient tent of the wanderings; the Brazen Altar for sacrifice was in front of it, 2 Ch. 1.3-5. The Hebrew word translated "high place" means a Canaanitish sacred spot, or place for sacrifice, located upon a hill-top near each town and village. The Israelites consecrated such "high places" to the worship of Jehovah. The law of Dt. 12.10-14 forbids the worship at high places, restricting the worship to a single sanctuary, but worship at high places was practiced until the time of Hezekiah, 2 K. 18.4.—*A thousand burnt-offerings.* It was a great assembly, 2 Ch. 1.2-3, and therefore the offerings

Assyrian Sacrificial Scene on an Obelisk from Nimrud

were so many; moreover, Solomon desired to display his royal munificence.—*Did Solomon offer.* Through the priests, who sacrificed the animals. The Chief Priest was Zadok, who had brought the sacred oil from the Tabernacle to anoint Solomon king of Israel.

5. *Ask what I shall give thee.*

Choose well; your choice is
Brief and yet endless. *Goethe.*

Recall Christ's words: Ask, and it shall be given you!

6. *Thou hast kept for him this great loving-kindness.* Solomon regards his being made king as a great kindness shown to his father David; compare 1 K. 1.48.

7. *I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in.* "To go out or come in" was a proverbial expression meaning to conduct public or military affairs. With customary oriental exaggeration, Solomon thus acknowledges his lack of experience and his realization of the greatness of the task before him. Compare Jer. 1.6-8. "Solomon, my son, is young and tender," said David when he began his preparations for the Temple which Solomon should build. Josephus says that Solomon was only fourteen years old on his accession to the throne, but we know from I K. 11.42 and 14.21 that he was already married to Rehoboam's mother. It is generally supposed that he was about twenty at this time.

8. *That cannot be numbered nor counted for multitudes.* Oriental hyperbole for a great number; perhaps there is a reference to the promise made to Abraham.

9. *Understanding.* Hebrew, *hearing,* RVm. "A hearing heart" is explained by Dr. van Dyke's words: "There is no speech nor language to express the secret messages of God, that make perpetual music in the hearing heart."—*Heart.* The heart stands as the seat of both thought and feeling. "A receptive mind, one that listens and considers before it decides" (*Skinner*).—*To judge thy people.* "Happy the land whose ruler deems it his highest function to administer justice. Cyrus relates how he was especially trained to form righteous judgments. Solomon in his dream doubtless expressed his waking and deliberate wish. God giveth to him that hath. Solomon had wisdom enough to make him wish for more. His main desire was for practical wisdom, sagacity, clearness of judgment and intellect, wisdom to govern "(*Wood*).—*That I may discern between good and evil.* Solomon's prayer exhibits a consciousness that truth and falsehood, right and wrong, are not always easy to distinguish, and that to discern between them there are needed special gifts of the heart and understanding" (*Dummelow*).

10. *The speech pleased the Lord.* "Although Solomon's choice was made 'in a dream' we must regard it as springing from his will in some degree, and therefore as indicative of his moral character. Aristotle says 'the dreams of good men are better than those of ordinary persons', and it seems certain that the will is often only partially suspended, even in our natural sleep".

11. *Long life.* Hebrew, *many days,* RVm.—*Discern.* Hebrew, *hear,* RVm.

12. *I have done . . . I have given.* "Perfects of certitude, in a Divine promise: the action determined upon by the will of the Speaker is regarded as already accomplished" (*Burney*).—*A wise heart.* "His wisdom was not necessarily of that character which is suggested by the term today; the absence of moral and spiritual perception was not incompatible with it. At this period the designation 'wise' was used in an exceedingly restricted sense; it was applicable to the woman of Tekoah, whose services Joab solicited to gain David's consent to Absalom's recall. Subtle, cunning, keen to perceive that which is not at first apparent, is its meaning. The best illustrations are the stories which are told respecting Solomon, as examples of his remarkable wisdom". See 1 K. 3.16-28; and p. 310. For the modern meaning of the word see ¶ 9, p. 314.— *An understanding heart.* "A heart that hears and drinks in the Divine teaching."

13. *And I have also given thee.* Compare Mt. 6.33: But seek ye first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.—*Both riches and honor.* Great gifts when rightly used.—*There shall not be.*

Or, *there hath not been,* RVm.—*Any among the kings like unto thee.* Compare 1 K. 4. 29-34.

14. *If thou wilt walk in my ways.* Note the great word *if,* and recall Solomon's failures in his old age, 1 K. 11.1-13.—*To keep my statutes and my commandments.* This explains what is meant by "walking in my ways".—*As thy father David did walk.* Although David failed to keep all the commandments, he always recognized the rulership of God.—*Then I will lengthen thy days.* Solomon did not fulfill the condition: he was probably not over sixty at his death.

15. *Behold, it was a dream.* Three dreams of Solomon are recorded. In Old Testament times men expected to learn God's will through dreams. Compare Saul's disappointment at not receiving a dream, 1 S. 28.6.—*He came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah.* Recall the lesson about the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem.—*And offered up burnt-offerings.* This act of worship was was also a consecration of himself to the kingship.—*Made a feast to all his servants.* They partook of the peace-offerings.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *The great high place.* To select a lofty place for worship was natural to orientals. The Babylonians living in a flat county, built mounds on which they erected their temples. The Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Germans sacrificed on the hills. We are told in the "Iliad" that the Trojans offered sacrifices to Zeus on Mount Ida. On the snow-covered summit of Hermon are ruins of a very ancient temple where Baal was worshipped.

9. *To judge thy people.* An oriental monarch is the chief judge as well as the king; to hear and decide cases is one of his most important duties. An instance of Solomon's wise judgment is given in verses 16-28, following this lesson.

15. *Behold it was a dream.* Orientals have always held that dreams were sent for a purpose, and there have always been those who claimed to be able to interpret them. We see the antiquity of this custom in the history of Pharaoh's butcher and baker, Pharaoh himself, and Nebuchadnezzar.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What instances of oriental hyperbole have we already had in our lessons? What does the expression "to go out and come in" mean? Who made a wise choice in one of our first quarter's lessons? When did Samuel express humility before a great task? When did Saul? When did David? Where was the Ark at this time?

The Secure Establishment of Solomon. Full of days, riches and honor, David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. Solomon's first concern as king was to put out of the way all his enemies and rivals. "Prince by the blood-stained marriage of his father, and king through his mother's intrigues, Solomon was obliged to secure himself by removing all possible stays of the legitimate succession." In three years' time Adonijah was put to death (see ¶ 7, p. 286); Abiathar was deposed from the priesthood, and banished to his estate at Anathoth, his place being given to Jadok; Joab was slain clinging to the horns of the altar at Gibeon where he had fled, and where according to the law he should have been safe, and the command of the army was given to Benaiah; and Shimei, who had cursed David when he fled from Absalom, was condemned to remain in Jerusalem all his life and was slain when he went to Gath in search of two runaway servants. "It was like a battle fought and won, of the new permanent organization of the monarchy over the wild anarchial elements of the older system that had still lingered in the reign of David," observes Dean Stanley. "Joab, the Douglas of the house of David, was like a Douglas slain; with the fall of Shimei, perished the last bitter representative of the rival house of Saul; the Chief Priest Abiathar, last of the house of Eli, was the last possessor of the now obsolete Urim and Thummim, the last survivor of David's early companions; the young King triumphed over all the ancient factions of Israel, and in him triumphed the cause of monarchy and civilization for all coming time."

The Character of Solomon. "When we pass from David to Solomon, from Second Samuel to First Kings, we are conscious of a change in both the quality of the drama and the character of its hero", to quote Dr. George Adam Smith's words in his Second Volume on Jerusalem. "Instead of the palpable figure, the vivid features of a man, there arises an apparition more majestic, indeed, but, just by reason of its grandeur, nebulous and vague. *Solomon in all his glory*—we see the glory, but are dazzled as to the man behind it. In part, at least, this haze may be attributed to the style of the narrators. Of the history of David, the bulk is the precious bequest of a contemporary, who has not lost sight of the man in the monarch. But of Solomon's history much more is due to writers at a distance from their subject, and even where the text is taken from contemporary annals it seems to be the work of courtiers to whom the King, the Royal Personage, is everything Even so, however, the questions arise, whether some of the haze may not be due to the want in Solomon himself of the character and passion that give distinctness to all the movements of David; or whether the features of the great Sultan are hidden from us only by the largeness and splendor of his policy, and through lack of that atmosphere of adversity which alone reveals a man to his contemporaries and posterity.

"Solomon's appearances are all official—on the judgment-seat, on the throne, consecrating the Temple. Even such as are religious are after a more sober style of religion. They have lost the primitive ecstacy which distinguished the worship of both of his predecessors. He sleeps, it is true, in a sanctuary in order to induce a dream; but we cannot conceive of Solomon either tearing his clothes and lying prostrate like Saul, or dancing before the Ark as David his father did. Even the wisdom which exalts his personality sublimates it at the same time. Even the one personal temper imputed to him,—*now King Solomon loved women . . . he took foreign wives*,—may have been only the result of policy and a love of splendor. His establishment of many strange shrines in Jerusalem was certainly due to such motives as well as to the exigencies of the foreign trade upon which he adventured. In short, behind his wealth, his wisdom, his wives and his idols, it is difficult to discern the real man. Yet through that long and prosperous reign the throne must have been filled by a personality of unusual power."

Solomon's Wonderful Dream and Wise Choice. It is not possible to give a strictly chronological arrangement of Solomon's reign. Presumably the solemnization of his accession to the throne occurred in his first year. The Ark was in its temporary tent at Jerusalem, but the Tabernacle of the wilderness wanderings was at Gibeon, "the great high place." To Gibeon Solomon went in state, accompanied by a vast retinue, there to offer a great sacrifice of a thousand victims on the altar of burnt-offerings. That night when the smoke of the sacrifice had rolled away and the music and noise had ceased, Solomon slept, and in a prophetic dream held communion with Jehovah, was offered the great choice, and chose, not his own aggrandizement, but wisdom in discharging aright the duties of his great office.

From the height of Gibeon the king retired to Jerusalem, and offered sacrifices before the Ark. While these solemn rites were being held, he was given a chance to show his wisdom in the case of the two mothers with the living and dead babies, each of whom claimed the babe that was alive. Solomon ordered the living babe cut in two and half given to each woman, and discerned the true mother in the one who was unwilling to have the child slain. "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore." Further information about his wisdom is given in Lesson V.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Gibeon was five and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. There are eight springs here, and a large ancient reservoir. In the ninth chapter of Joshua we read of the stratagem by which the Gibeonites secured a treaty with Joshua. Here the Tabernacle and the brazen altar for burnt-offerings were brought from their previous resting-place at Nob, and they remained here till removed by Solomon to the Temple. North of Gibeon there is a river-bed now called by the Arabs Wady Suleyman (Solomon).

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Even the smallest child has the power to choose. In the life of every human being volition is the central factor. How he chooses is the supreme thing. To influence the volition of pupils is the main purpose of Sunday-school teaching. Events in the lives of the saints and the sinners of our year's course should be so taught that pupils will naturally choose to follow the right example, to shun the evil example.

Something of Solomon's sense of responsibility in his office all sincere teachers experience. What position is more responsible than that which deals with the formation of character?

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Recall by questions last week's lesson. Describe the gay procession going from Jerusalem to Gibeon, with the young King Solomon at the head, and the offering of sacrifices on the hill-side. After you have taught the lesson, talk about good and better prayer-wishes. Tell the story of Sandalphon, p. 297.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. You have all read fairy stories in which the choice of all good things has been offered to some one: if that choice were given you, what would you choose? There is a story about a choice of Hercules, who was the most famous of all the heroes of Grecian mythology. Two beautiful maidens called upon him in his youth, one named Pleasure and the other Virtue; the first one offered him a life of ease and delight, and the other a life of usefulness and fame. Hercules chose Virtue, and spent the greater part of his life in doing things to help weaker people with his wonderful strength. Two thousand years ago this story of Xenophon's about Hercules' choice delighted the people, for every one likes to see the right choice made between two possible opportunities. The most famous wrong choice ever made in real life is that of the rich young ruler who came to Christ and asked him what he must do to gain eternal life. Who can tell us what was his choice? (Matt. 19.21, 22.) The most famous right choice is the subject of our lesson today.

For Older Pupils. One night James Murdock, the noted elocutionist, overheard President Lincoln praying. Mr. Lincoln was on his knees before an open Bible, and these were the words of his pleading: "O thou God that heard Solomon in the night, when he prayed for wisdom, hear me. I cannot lead this people, I cannot guide the affairs of this nation, without thy help. I am poor and weak and sinful. O God, who didst hear Solomon when he cried for wisdom, hear me and save this nation." What was the incident which President Lincoln had in mind?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Meeting a Great Responsibility

Solomon's Attitude. In former times the Kings of Persia heard on awakening each morning the voice of a priest calling to them and saying: "Master, arise and consider for what purpose God has placed you on the throne." This was the thought that had engrossed the mind of the youthful Solomon in the early days after he ascended his father's throne. He had meditated on the greatness of his father David, on the size and importance of his realm, on his own inexperience and the responsibilities before him, and on his great need of divine help, if he were to rule wisely as he then longed to do. All this is shown in his dream, for dreams are influenced by the thoughts of the waking hours. We do not dream of what we know nothing of, but of what we are interested in, just as Pharaoh's butler dreamed of Pharaoh's cup, and his baker of his baskets of white bread and baked food.

The Effect of Responsibility. In a far western town a number of years ago, it was well known that the Democratic candidate for re-election as mayor had not only mismanaged the public funds but had by "graft" enriched his own coffers through his office. That the Republican candidate would do the

same if elected, was also well known. A number of citizens were discussing the situation in a store when one of them exclaimed: "Let us put up an independent candidate; let us run this worthless, drunken youth here for the office." The young man mentioned was very rarely seen sober, and was then so intoxicated that he could not comprehend what was being said. The thought of giving such a lesson to the two parties, proving that in their opinion a worthless drunkard was better than the rascals on the regular tickets, "took" in the community, and the drunkard was duly elected. The inn-keeper aroused him one night from his stupor and succeeded in convincing him that he was the mayor of the town. From that moment he never took another drop of liquor, and devoted himself to the task thrust upon him with marvelous energy and honesty and ability. He received counsel from the wisest men in town, he worked early and late, he examined into all the crooked dealings, and cut down the public expenses by half without interfering in any way with the town's best interest. Responsibility made a new man of him.

What Solomon needed for his High Task you and I need. A wisdom, greater than our own, to train children, to manage a business or a home, to pursue our calling, to manage the affairs of a Christian Church. We ought not to be content to do these things in an indifferent way, in a second best way. No Christian man should be content to be a poor accountant, or merchant, or traveller, or salesman, or doctor, or engineer—satisfied with just slipping through. If God has called us to our calling, it is legitimate to desire that we be not foolish and bungling, but wise and expert in it; and my own personal belief is that for the thing to which we are called—though it seem far above us—God will give us strength, if with lowly heart we wait on him. There is as much reason for a man to pray that he may buy and sell, or learn and teach well, as for Solomon to pray that he might rule well. And for all work called sacred or secular, in home or Church, there is wisdom greater than our own needed, which God will give to those who truly seek, who "ask in good faith," as St. James says. *Charles Brown,* in *The Birth of a Nation.*

II The Wise Choice

The Choice of Solomon and of a Greater than Solomon. To Solomon's mind must have appeared riches and power and fame and all the golden possibilities before a young ruler just established on a great throne. What should he ask for? "Let me be wise," was his wish, wise to rule his realm rightly, possessed of an understanding heart to judge between good and evil. "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."

A thousand years later a Greater than Solomon was taken by the devil unto an exceeding high mountain, and shown all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and the devil said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. What was Christ's choice? "Get thee hence, Satan;" he said, "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil departed from him for a season; and behold, the angels came and ministered unto him.

The Best Choice. If God says to us, in the bright promise of youth, "Ask what I shall give thee", let us make the best choice, and answer: "Give me grace to know thy Son, the Christ, and to grow like him"; for that is the true wisdom which leads to eternal life, and that is the true royalty which brings dominion over self, and that is the true happiness which flows unsought from fellowship with the Divine Life. *Dr. Henry van Dyke, Sermons to Men.*

Covet earnestly the Best Gifts. The old Jewish rabbis used to tell charming stories about an angel whom they called Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer. Musing upon these stories, Mr. Benjamin J. Gibbon seemed to find himself in the outer court of heaven by Sandalphon's side, and this is what he saw and heard.

I noticed some of his servant-angels were very busy, and Sandalphon explained. "These are the angels of request," he said. "They are bringing requests—petitions to God—from all kinds of people, good and bad, old and young, scattered all over the earth." But I could see that many of these requests did not please him. I asked him why. "Come with me into the storehouse," he answered.

Then I saw that in that outer court there was a kind of store, very large with this inscription over the door: "The Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." On the entrance floor there was a great and shining collection of "spiritual gifts," as the angel called them. I cannot describe them to you, except by saying that I could see they were very valuable, and that they shone like diamonds and pearls, and other precious things. "They are faith, hope, and love, and patience, and peace, and joy," Sandalphon said, and I could not help noticing that he himself was adorned with such jewels. Then he took me to the upper floor, which seemed to be filled with pieces of shining armor. "These are gifts for service,' he said—"courage, and zeal, and watchfulness, and prayer, and understanding of the Bible, and the power of the spirit, and faithfulness unto death. I suppose you must come into the cellar now," he went on, and took me to an underground room, which was dim and even dusty. I saw some coins there that were not very bright, and some wreaths that did not look fresh. "These are money, and fame, and worldly success," he explained. In the corner I noticed a big rubbish heap. "Those are unanswered prayers," he said. "But I saw none in the jewel room, or in the armory," said I. "No," he replied; "There are no unanswered prayers for those things. God delights to bestow his best gifts, and no one ever asks for them in vain. Every prayer for a jewel, or a piece of armor, is always answered. But—would you believe it?" he said, with a sad smile, "we do not get nearly so many prayers for those precious gifts as for these things"—and he kicked a heap of dim gold and another of dull wreaths. "People are always asking to get on, and to become rich, and to be made famous, and that is why their prayers are unanswered." "Do you show these requests to God?" I asked. "O yes," he said, "every prayer goes to God, but this kind generally ends in the rubbish heap. God wants to make people good, and they only ask him to make them prosperous, and so he ignores their prayers. Often, of course, he sends these things, because they are needed in the affairs of the earth. But we think very little of them up here."

III The Fear of Jehovah is the Beginning of Wisdom

The Value and Source of Wisdom. Read Proverbs 3.13-17 and Job 28.20, 23, 28.

Tsong Kyning's Prayer for the True Wisdom. A letter which this Christian wrote China Inland Missionaries at Sinchaughsien, is addressed to "The Teachers of True Happiness." It contains a beautiful prayer and wish:—

The past years of my life have been spent like a stupid man in a burning house, or like a blind man falling into a deep pond. Now, through God's Holy Spirit, the Gospel of his only begotten Son is given to me and turns my darkness into light. I had almost missed the fording-place and, here it is! here it is! Day and night my prayer is that the only great Ruler—the True Spirit—will give me understanding and wisdom that I may make known this great salvation, and discard all false doctrines, not caring any more for them.

I am like a wild mulberry tree being grafted into a garden mulberry tree. My words and my actions are all changing.

I have received the books you sent me. When I come to difficult passages in the Bible I will seek God's help to follow its teachings and, throwing aside all hindrances, will search the Scriptures and become a true slave of Jesus Christ.

Senator Hoar's Position. During the later years of Senator Hoar's life he found himself strongly opposed by the leaders of his party in his attitude toward the Philippines, and he was accused by his opponents of being actuated by fear in the position he took. "I admit that I am moved by fear," was his reply, "but it is that fear which the Good Book describes as the beginning of wisdom—the fear of the Lord."

What is being done to Instill this Wisdom in the Hearts of the Children in Eastern Lands? Our desire for the extension of the work of the Sunday school grows very intense as we think of the educational changes now characteristic of the great lands of the East. Vast numbers are in attendance upon the public schools. It will be unspeakably regrettable if, while the mind is developing, the spiritual nature is allowed to be stunted or debased. In our

home countries the need of supplementing through the Sunday school the work of the public school is recognized as imperative. How acute then this need in these Eastern lands! *Executive Committee of Zürich Convention.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

At the beginning of his reign, Solomon thought of his position as a responsibility for others, not as an opportunity for himself. Everyone's life, however humble, has great possibilities and tremendous responsibilities. These are Dr. N. D. Hillis' words to young men: "Young men, accept responsibility; attach yourself by pledges to every good institution, political, social, literary, and religious; be grateful to the Angel of Responsibility that urges you with swift steps along the highways that lead to happiness and usefulness and character."

Seek ye first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, Mt. 6.33. "Man can not escape a responsibility of choice; it faces him at every moment of his life, most of all in those beautiful and strenuous days when the bases of his manhood are being laid; then it is that he ought to seek the kingdom of God that he may win the noblest manhood."

Our Prayer: "O God, give me thyself; for all things are contained in thee; thou art wisdom; thou art wealth; thou art power; thou art length of days; thou art fulness.

> Give what thou wilt, without thee I am poor.
> And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The moral obligation to be intelligent. See the *Hibbert Journal,* October, 1913, p. 174; the Missing of Wisdom, p. 21 in "Listening to God", by the Rev. Hugh Black; "The Dream of Youth", Hugh Black; Heavenly Wisdom, p. 70 in "New Starts in Life," Phillips Brooks.
2. Duties of privileges. See First Topic; also chapter VI of "New Starts in Life", by Phillips Brooks.
3. The Sunday-school as an educational force. See this topic in the Report of the Zürich Convention, 1913, World's Sunday-school Association.
4. What part can our class have in aiding some young man or woman in getting an education?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What reason had David for wishing to build the temple? 2. What commendation did he receive for his wish to build the Temple? (1 K. 8.17-19.) 3. Why was he not permitted to build it, and who was he told should build it? (1 Ch. 17.3-14; 1 K. 5.3; 1 Ch. 22.8.) 4. What preparations did he make for the Temple? (1 Ch. 29.2-5.) 5. Read the accounts of the building and dedication of the Temple in 2 K. 5-8 and 2 Ch. 5-7. 6. Describe the Temple. (*Guide,* ¶ 9, p. 304.) 7. Where was the Temple located, and how was the level Temple area made? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 302.) 8. What was the condition on which the Temple should continue as the house of God? (1 K. 9.1-9.) 9. When did Jesus use the word temple to refer to himself, and how was the saying perverted and used against him? (Jn. 2.19-22; Mt. 26.61; 27.40.) 10. On what occasion did Jesus repeat the words of Isaiah in our Golden Text? (Mk. 11.15-18.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What did Solomon's outstretched hands indicate? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 300.) 2. What was the promise made to David which had been kept? (2 S. 7.13.) 3. What was the promise made to David which Solomon asked to have fulfilled? 4. What is the connection between verses 27 and 28? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 301.) 5. What is the meaning of "pray toward this place"? (*Guide,* p. 301.) 6. At what age did Jesus make his first visit to the Temple? 7. Was this the Temple which Solomon built? 8. What did he call the Temple when his mother sought him? 9. What is the finest temple in Rome called? 10. In London? 11. In Constantinople?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Solomon write Part II, Solomon Chooses Wisdom.

LESSON IV—JULY 25

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

Golden Text

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Isaiah 56.7

LESSON I Kings 8.1-53: verses 22-30 printed
MEMORIZE verses 23, 24

22 And Solomon stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; 23 and he said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and lovingkindness with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; 24 who hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him: yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. 25 Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me as thou hast walked before me. 26. Now therefore, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded! 28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day; 29 that thine eyes may be opened toward this house night and day, even toward the place whereof thou hast said, My name shall be there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray toward this place. 30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

22. *Solomon stood before the altar.* In the court in front of the Temple, before the altar of burnt offering. He mounted a brazen scaffold which he had had made, and knelt to pray, 2 Ch. 6.13. "Solomon, in all his glory, looked not so great as he did now" (*Matthew Henry*).—*And spread forth his hands toward heaven.* "As it were to offer up the prayer from an open, enlarged heart and to present it to Heaven, and also to receive thence, with both arms, the mercy which he prayed for" (*Matthew Henry*). See p. 301.

23. *There is no God like thee.* There is nothing like thee.—*Who keepest covenant.* See Dt. 7.9; Ex. 20.6—*With.* Or, *for,* RVm.

24. *Thou hast kept with thy servant David that which thou didst promise him.* He shall build a house for my name, was the first half of the promise recorded in 2 S. 7.13. "The experiences we have had of God's performing his promises should encourage us to depend upon them and plead them with God, and those who expect further mercies must be thankful for former mercies. Hitherto God has helped, 2 Cor. 1.10" (*Matthew Henry*).—*As it is this day.* In verses 15-20 of this chapter, Solomon tells how his father David had wished to build the Temple. Did Emperor William have this in mind in his words at the dedication of the Church of the Redeemer at Jerusalem in 1898? Thus he began: "God has graciously permitted us, in this city sacred to all Christians, to dedicate the House of God erected in honor of the Redeemer of the World. What my God-fearing forefathers for more than half a century have longed for and have worked for, has now been fulfilled in the building and dedication of this Church of the Redeemer."

25. *There shall not fail thee a man in my sight. There shall not be cut off unto thee a man from my sight,* RVm. I will establish the throne of his king-

dom forever, was the second part of the promise made to David, as recorded in 2 S. 7.13.

26. *Let thy word be verified.* God had fulfilled a half of his promise to David in allowing Solomon to build "a house for his name", "as it is this day", verse 24. Solomon now pleads for the fulfillment of the other part of the promise to David, repeated in verse 25.

27. *But will God dwell.* The emphasis is upon *will.* The temple became a shrine, rather than a church. Later it was entered only by the priests and ministers anointed for its service, never by the rest of the Israelites, who worshipped in the court without. Its glory and fame above that of the great temples of Egypt, Babylon, and India, lay, not so much in its magnificence, as in its meaning as the house of God.—*Upon the earth.* Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what place shall be my rest? Isa. 66.1. Do not I fill heaven and earth? Jer. 23.24. Solomon realizes God's infinitude.—*Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.* "We have here one of the most spiritual truths of the Old Testament" (*Stanley*).

28. "This is the connection of verses 27 and 28: Thou art the infinite God whom no house built by man can contain, but I beseech thee to show thyself here, as a God who answers prayer" (*Lange*).—*Prayer . . . supplication . . . cry.* "The first expresses every thought of the heart which is to Godward; the second is entreaty for mercy and favor; the third is vehement utterance, whether of joy or sorrow" (*Wood*).

29. *That thine eyes may be open.* Compare Ps. 34.16. The place whereof thou hast said, My name shall be there. See Dt. 12.5, 11; 14.23, 24; 16.2, 6-11; 26.2. "To say that the name of Jehovah is *in* the sanctuary means practically that in that place Jehovah will *answer* to *his name*—will reveal his gracious presence in response to the worship of his servants" (*Skinner*).—*The prayer which thy servant shall pray toward this place.* See below.

30. *And when thou hearest, forgive.* The house of God was set apart, not only for prayer but also for confession of sin and realization of forgiveness.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

22. *And Solomon stood and spread forth his hands toward heaven.* This was the customary attitude in prayer: compare Ex. 9.29; Isa. 1.15. Usually the hands were stretched out palms upward, indicating desire for God's gracious direction and willingness to receive the gifts that come from him.

Anchises Praying
From The Vatican Vergil

30. *When they shall pray towards this place.* The Jew away from Jerusalem always prayed facing the Holy City. Daniel in Babylon knelt and prayed three times a day facing his open window which looked towards Jerusalem.

Keblah is the term by which the Mohammedans designate the direction towards which they are commanded to turn their faces in their devotions. "At first, Mohammed and his followers did not turn their faces towards any certain place or quarter of the world when they prayed. Afterwards, when the prophet fled to Medina, he directed them to turn towards the temple of Jerusalem (probably to ingratiate himself with the Jews), which continued to be their *Keblah* for six or seven months; but, either finding the Jews too intractable, or despairing of otherwise gaining the pagan Arabs, who could not forget their respect for Mecca, he ordered that prayers for the future be towards Mecca. This change was made in the second year of the Hegira, and occasioned many to fall from him, taking offense at his inconstancy."

In all Moslem mosques today there is a niche, called the *Mihrab,* in the direction in which Mecca lies, towards which the faithful are required to pray.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What happened to the Ark in the time of Eli? Who brought the Ark to Jerusalem? Where was it placed? What was the Golden

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Text for the lesson about the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem? Where had the Ark been between the time of Eli and its entrance into Jerusalem? What reference is there to the house of the Lord in one of the Psalms we have studied?

David's Purpose of Building the Temple. After David had built a stately palace for himself, he next purposed building a sanctuary. He himself was dwelling in a house of cedar, he said to the prophet Nathan, but the Ark of God was housed in a tent. At first Nathan approved of David's plan to build a temple, but after he had thought over the situation and had received divine instruction, he came to David with a different message. It was not God's will that David should build him a house. 1 Ch. 22.8 declares that it was not fitting that the temple should be built by David because he was a man of war. Yet other reasons may have been that the affairs of the kingdom were not yet sufficiently settled to permit David to devote the necessary energy to building a temple (1 K. 5.3), and that it would require all the time and resources at David's command merely to collect materials for the temple. David was assured that he should be the founder of a permanent dynasty, and a descendant of his should build the temple.

The Temple Built by Solomon. As Augustus Cæsar is said to have found Rome brick and left it marble, so it may be said that Solomon found Jerusalem a fortress and left it a city, found the sanctuary a tent and left it a temple of stone. In 1 K. 5-7 and 2 Ch. 2-4 are accounts of Solomon's league with Hiram, King of Tyre, by which he obtained timber and laborers for the temple, and of his levy of Israelite laborers to prepare the timber and stones, a description of the temple and of the works in brass—pillars, altar, molten sea, etc.—and a list of the golden vessels.

The Dedication of the Temple. The foundation stone of the temple was laid in May of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and the building was completed in November of the eleventh year. In October of the year following, at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles, it was solemnly dedicated. As the bringing up of the ark to the city of David had been the greatest day in David's reign, so now the dedication of the temple was the culminating glory of Solomon's. From all parts of the realm the people were gathered at the capital. The chief men of the nation Solomon assembled to bring from Gibeon the ancient tent of meeting with its sacred vessels, and from its temporary tent on Mount Zion the ark of the covenant. Sacrifices without number celebrated the last journey of the ark. The priests brought it into the the Oracle, the Holy of Holies, and placed it under the outstretched wings of the cherubim, so that one standing near the doorway between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place could see the ends of the staves by which the ark was carried, but they were invisible to one as far away as the length of the Holy Place. Within the ark there was no representation of God, nothing but the two tables of stone on which were engraved the ten commandments, placed there by Moses at Horeb. The priests came out and took up their position between the porch and the altar, opposite them stood the great chorus of white-robed musicians and singers, round about were the innumerable throng of spectators, and seated upon a brazen platform was King Solomon surrounded by his guard of five hundred men, each with his shield of gold. As the priests left the Holy Place "a cloud filled the house, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" and "the mighty chorus lifted up their voice and praised the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." Then Solomon arose, solemnly blessed the people, offered a dedicatory prayer and then closed with another benediction. The sacrifice of multitudes of sheep and oxen followed. For seven days the "dedication of the altar" lasted, and the feast of the tabernacles seven other days. Finally the king dismissed the people to their homes, "Joyful and glad of heart for the goodness that Jehovah had showed unto David and Solomon, and to Israel his people."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On Mount Moriah, the hill in Jerusalem having the Valley of the Kidron on the east and the Tyropœan Valley on the west, an ample space for the Temple was made level by building vast substructures, (portions of which are still standing today), and filling in the deep inequalities with "hewed stones." Here,

on the rock now crowned by "The Dome of the Rock" (often called the mosque of Omar), the Temple was erected.

The first verse of our chapter speaks of bringing up the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. The traditional view has been that Mt. Zion was the hill now so-called, the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, west of the Tyropœan Valley, the highest hill of the city; in this case the adverb "up" could be used in the sense that the procession had to descend Mt. Zion and then ascend Mt. Moriah. Recent scholarship holds that David built his city on the site of the old fortress of the Jebusites, the southern and lowest spur of the eastern hill. It is thought that Zion was the name for the whole eastern ridge, whose three separate portions were called from north to south Moriah, Ophel, and City of David. On Mt. Moriah was the Temple; on Ophel, the royal palace and other magnificent buildings within the wall that enclosed the Temple area, and on the southern spur, the city of David.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Sometimes in former days, a beautiful church was built and the Sunday-school was housed in the cellar. I know of several churches where the cellar is still in use for that purpose. Formerly the sanctuary was made beautiful, but the Sunday-school room was left dingy and unattractive. Fortunately that is not now the case. With the years, however, the needs of the Sunday-school have grown. Have you a separate department room? Is it made as bright and attractive as possible? Have you a special class room? Has it comfortable chairs? Are there pictures on the walls? Maps and blackboard ready for use?

You are temple-builders—co-workers with Christ in the building of character. "To build the noblest materials into a holy temple unto the Lord, you need the Lord of the Temple to assist you. Without the supreme Architect and Builder—God the Spirit—your work will not stand. It is your comfort to know that none need labor without his aid."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Show your pupils Tissot's picture No. 93, Solomon Dedicates the Temple, as you talk about the lesson. From Laura Ella Craigin's Old Testament Stories. I have condensed this account:—

Do you not like to build houses and forts, gates and walls, children? I am sure that every child enjoys building with blocks or stones, and likes also to watch carpenters and masons at work. Would you like now to hear of a wonderful house that King Solomon built?

Soon after Solomon began to reign, Hiram, king of Tyre, sent greetings to him, for he had always been David's friend, and he wished to be a friend of his son, also. When Solomon replied to this greeting, he told King Hiram that his father David had wished to build a house for God but he had not been able to do so. Now, however, he, himself, wished to begin this Temple at once and he asked King Hiram to help him. Some of Hiram's people, the Sidonians, were very skillful in preparing wood for building and Solomon asked that these men might cut and prepare the cedar trees for him.

King Hiram was very glad to help Solomon and he wrote that his people would cut down the beautiful cedar and cypress trees, slide them down the sides of the mountains, and then make them into rafts and float them on the sea to Joppa, from which place Solomon's men could drag them up to Jerusalem. In return for this labor, Solomon promised to give wheat and barley, oil and wine, which Hiram was very glad to have.

For several years thousands of men were busily working to prepare the materials with which to build the Temple. Some hewed out great stones from the mountains, others cut them into perfect shape, while still others made ready the wood. Then the top of the mountain, or highest hill, in Jerusalem, where the Temple was to be built, was too small, so it had to be made larger, and great walls built about it to hold it up. These walls were made so wonderfully strong that some of them are standing even now, almost three thousand years after they were built.

At last in the spring, four years after Solomon had been made king, he began to build the Temple. The Temple was built of stone, and inside it was made of the beautiful cedar wood, which was later all covered with gold. Before the entrance was a porch and on this porch stood two beautifully carved pillars of brass. In this porch were hung the gilded shields which David had taken from some of his enemies in war and perhaps the sword of Goliath.

And inside the Temple, farthest from the entrance, was a small room made of cedar all covered with gold. In this room were placed two beautiful cherubim, or angels, made of olive wood covered with gold. Their wings were outspread and two touched each other in the centre of the room, while the other wing of each cherubim touched the wall. A curtain embroidered in blue, purple and crimson, looped with chains of gold, hung at the entrance of this room.

When everything was finished, Solomon called together all the princes and leaders of the people to march in a great procession. Then the priests carried the ark, which contained the ten commandments, from the tent where David had placed it and set it down in the small room at the end of the Temple, under the outstretched wings of the cherubim. And when the ark was in its place, a cloud filled the room. Solomon and all the people knelt down and covered their faces, for they knew that God had come to dwell in his House.

The priests and musicians, robed all in white, sang, and played on golden harps or blew on silver trumpets. One of their songs was a beautiful one written by David, which begins:

"Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good;
For his mercy endureth forever."

Then the king, in beautiful embroidered robes, blessed the people, after which he turned towards the altar and, kneeling, he prayed to God. He thanked the dear heavenly Father for all his goodness to his people and for letting them build this Temple for him, and he asked him to be with them always, to forgive them if they did wrong and to keep them near him. Then all the people had a great feast, lasting seven days, during which they rejoiced that the Temple was finished.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In Constantinople there is a beautiful mosque called Sancta Sophia, Church of the Divine Wisdom. It was originally built by the Emperor Justinian as a Christian Church. When the Church was consecrated in 548 A.D., Justinian raised his hands to heaven with the cry, "Glory be to God who hath thought me worthy to accomplish so great a work!" Then he looked around and exclaimed, "I have surpassed thee, O Solomon!" What did he mean by this exclamation?

For Older Pupils. We read of fortifications being erected in several towns during Solomon's reign, and in recent years remains of some of them have been identified, at Migiddo, Taanach, and Gezer. The masonry is massive, the stones are well squared and often drafted, as we find them today in that portion of the substructure of the Temple at Jerusalem which dates from Solomon's time.

Three temples have stood on this same spot, but to the Jews the third temple of Herod seemed the very first temple of Solomon. Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzer; Zerubabbel's temple, built by the exiles who returned from Babylon, was frequently desecrated; and the third temple, built by Herod the Great, was destroyed by the army of Titus. In 637 A. D. Omar, the second Caliph, or successor of Mohammed, conquered Palestine; the present "Dome of the Rock" often called in his honor the Mosque of Omar, was built on the temple site.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I God's House

Solomon's Temple Compared with Egyptian Temples. Compared with the religious buildings of Assyria, Babylon, or Egypt, a structure like the temple, apart from its vast substructions, was hardly worthy of notice, either for its size or splendor. The great temple of Amon, at Thebes, for example,

ultimately extended to a length of one thousand, one hundred and seventy feet, while the ruins of its associated edifices still cover a plateau nearly four miles in circumference. Nor is the contrast between the simplicity of the Israelite temple and the splendor of those on the Nile less striking. Its exterior seems to have been entirely plain, and though there was a pillared porch, it shrank into insignificance before the long avenues of mighty columns of Egyptian sanctuaries, the alleys of sphinxes, the obelisks, and the vast pylons, all, in common with the temples themselves, covered with sculpture and ornament.

But the lavish employment of gold for the decoration of the interior of Solomon's building exceeds anything told us of other ancient temples. Israel was still wholly dependent on foreign artistic skill, and at the same time, was rigidly excluded from whatever even remotely pointed to the heathen ideas which were then the basis of all art. Only innocent details could be sanctioned, the bas-reliefs of palms and flowers, the forms of lions and oxen, and the mystical shapes of the winged cherubim were the widest range of invention or fancy permitted. Even in those, Phœnician art, borrowed from Assyria, may be traced, for the ruins of Nineveh still disclose allied conceptions and style of ornament.

The cherubim there were of olive-wood, plated with the finest gold. The door into the Holy of Holies was secured by golden chains passing across and fastened to the walls. A thick curtain of blue, purple, and crimson, on a white ground of the finest linen, covered with figures of cherubim, hung outside the doors of the Holy of Holies, to screen it from all eyes.

In the Holy Place stood a table covered with plates of gold, but instead of the single seven-branched candlestick of the Tabernacle, ten separate lamps of gold were placed, five on the north and five on the south side, the snuffers, tongs and snuff dishes being also of pure gold.

The inner walls of the whole building were adorned throughout with cherubim, palms, and carved work of lilies, in stalk and leaf and flower. The walls were also enriched with precious stones. *Dr. Cunningham Geikie.*

God's House May be Everywhere. Do not draw a line of separation between the house of God and the house of business: the counting-house and the shop may be as much the house of God as the holiest shrine where generations have knelt in prayer. *F. B. Meyer.*

II A House of Prayer

Can You Repeat Solomon's Prayer? "China's Millions" contains a report of a recent examination upon Bible knowledge held at Hunan. For two hours a young farmer had been reciting Scripture with only three or four mistakes, when he was told to repeat Solomon's prayer. "May we kneel as the great king did?" he asked quietly. Then reverently and beautifully, without a slip, he repeated the thirty-nine verses comprising that prayer.

Silent Prayer on Entering the House of Prayer. Many worshippers have formed the custom of bowing the head for a few moments of silent prayer after reaching their seats. It would be excellent if this became general. There are several things that are fitting subjects of prayer at such a time:

Pray for the preacher, that he may be filled with the Holy Ghost as he delivers his message.

Pray for yourself, that all wandering thoughts may be banished and the soul be in proper condition for worship.

Pray that the service may give you strength for the needs of the coming week and a new consecration for a religious life.

Pray that burdened souls in the congregation may find peace and that the unconverted may be brought to God.

Pray that no stranger go away from the service feeling lonely and forlorn. *Epworth Outlook.*

Things Intolerable in the House of Prayer. To say to a congregation, "Let us pray," and find that it is the signal for the majority of the congregation to lean back in their pews and stare at you, to be moved and led into the very presence of God by some preacher and then have the whole atmosphere of worship dissipated by a string of fussy notices, to hear a preacher

refer to a congregation as an "audience"; to hear the congregation refer to praise and prayers as "the preliminaries"—these things are intolerable. I do not believe that we here are guilty of these irreverences and jarring vulgarisms. If I did I would never rest or hold my speech until I had either changed the whole tone and atmosphere or found another congregation. Do not enter this house without a moment with bowed head and silent prayer. If it is a form to you, then observe it. It is not a form to your fellow worshippers, and you owe something to them if not to the place and to God. Let us not separate without a little time of silence and bowed head. It is not necessary to put on an overcoat during the last verse of the last hymn, or even to discover the exact whereabouts of your hat. The brevity and importance of time are not a more impressive fact then than at other times.

First, last, and all the time let us remember that this is the house of prayer. Let nothing take the supremacy from this. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession—these are the contents of our common prayer, and the note always of reverence and godly fear. Let us seek even before we enter his courts for a baptism of that spirit that we may be found in his temple "a people prepared of God." *Thomas Yates.*

And when Thou Hearest, Forgive!

And when thou hearest, Holy Lord, forgive!
Thus with wise reverence prayed King Solomon
When, as the crowning glory of his throne,
He claimed his God-bestowed prerogative,

And built the Temple; knowing that in all
Man thinks or does—ay, even when he prays,
Or in God's house spends dedicated days—
The taint yet lingers of our nature's fall.

Thou through whose power dead souls arise and live,
Thou in whose name we dare presume to teach
Of things so high, so far beyond our reach,—
Oh, when thou hearest, Holy Lord, forgive.

A. H. Browne.

A House of Prayer in Madagascar. Some natives of Tankey, on the island of Madagascar, had heard the word "praying" and knew that those who did that met in one place. They had no missionary, and no one was able to read, so they bought a New Testament, and every Sunday gathered at a house, placed the Testament on the table, and sat for a while in silence. Then a man arose and said, "Have all come from the north?" "Aye", was the answer. "Have all come from the south?" "Aye." "Have all come from the east and west?" "Aye." "Then let us break up, for we have all done our duty, but be sure and come early next Sunday." While they were thus praying thousands of lips in Christian nations were praying "Thy kingdom come." Which was the truest praying? Which were doing their duty? Christians surrounded by all the blessings of civilization, having in their power wealth enough to Christianize every island on the globe, or those heathen natives of Tankey, without a single blessing of civilization, except a Bible which no one could read? *Record of Christian Work.*

III For All Peoples

The Comprehensiveness of Solomon's Prayer. Solomon dedicates the house of God as a house for prayer, for confession of sin, for forgiveness. It is to be the place where the people of Israel will meet God when their crops fail or the blight and the caterpiller come to destroy them, when an oath is broken or an army is defeated, when in captivity through sin or—the strangest of all for that time—when strangers crowd into Jerusalem. Solomon must have thought of Israel as a missionary nation. He did not think of his people going, like Jonah, to distant lands to make known the true God, but he thought of people coming from distant lands to Jerusalem and the Temple, and learning there about Jehovah. The Temple was to be a house of prayer for all peoples.

Spiritual Hospitality. Moreover concerning the stranger! said Solomon in

his dedicatory prayer. Yes indeed, what space has "the stranger" in my supplications? Has he any place at all? Are my intercessions private enclosures, intended only for the select among my friends? Do I ever open the door to anyone outside my family circle?

Take care that the circle of your petitions grows wider every week. The pathos and the tragedy in many Christian lives is this: their prayers are no bigger today than they were twenty or thirty years ago. Spiritual hospitality is no richer; there are no more guests in their hearts. Prayers of that kind become very stale, for a man must become weary of the same company from day to day and from year to year. Let him give himself a surprise by introducing an outsider into the holy circle, some neglected vagrant who rarely comes within the petitions of the saints. Let Christians scour the world for needy people, and let them bring them under the influence of mighty intercession. *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Said a great King once, "Where I sleep, there is the palace." Each one of us may say, "Where I am, there is God's temple." "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee on the Mount", were the words ringing in the ears of Moses as he came down Mount Sinai to become the architect of God's dwelling-place, the tent of worship. We have had a pattern given us for our temple: if we model our lives upon Christ's life, God will dwell in us.

The tables of the law in the Ark of the Covenant were a constant reminder that God's promises to be with his people depended on their keeping his laws. "If a man love me, he will keep my word," said Christ, "and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." The indwelling of the Spirit in our human temples depends upon our obedience to Christ's words.

Our Prayer: O most holy and most merciful Father, who of thy goodness hast provided for us in this place a house set apart for thy worship and service; dispose our hearts to reverence thy sanctuary; vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to be there in the midst of us this day; pardon all our unworthiness, and enable us to present ourselves, our souls and bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord (*H. Stobart*).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Temple and its significance. See Stanley's History of the Jewish People, Vol. II, Chapter XXVII.
2. The house of prayer. See the Second Topic, and "The Uses of a Cathedral," *Outlook,* April 29, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. By what means was Solomon's fame extended? (*Guide.* ¶ 3, p. 308.) 2. Where was Sheba? (*Guide,* p. 311.) 3. What is said about wisdom in Eccles. 7.11-19? 4. What sort of house had Solomon built? (1 K. 7.1-12.) 5. What were Solomon's provisions for a day? (1 K. 4.22, 23.) 6. What does Josephus say about the decoration of Solomon's drivers? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 309.) 7. What was the value of 120 talents of gold? (Bible Dictionary.) 8. What does 1 Ch. 29.25 say about Solomon's royal majesty? 9. On what occasion and in what words did Jesus speak of Solomon's glory? (Mt. 6.28.29.) 10. What did Jesus say about a greater than Solomon? (Lk. 11.31.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is meant by "hard questions", verse 1? (*Guide,* p. 313.) 3. By "the sitting of his servants", verse 5? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 309.) 3. By "the ascent", verse 5? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 309.) 4. By "there was no more spirit in her", verse 5? 5. Why are the parenthetical verses 11-12 inserted? 6. What was the custom in regard to bringing gifts to a ruler? (Guide, ¶ 6, p. 309.) 7. What gifts to a Babe are recalled by the gifts of the Queen of Sheba? 8. Was the Queen of Sheba's curiosity commendable?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Solomon write Part III, Solomon's Temple. Give the length of time it took to build it, the materials used, the source of the materials, the builders, the plan and ornamentation.

LESSON V—AUGUST 1

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

Golden Text

Wisdom is better than rubies. Proverbs 8.11

LESSON I Kings 10.1-10,13 MEMORIZE verses 8,9

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions. 2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she was come to Solomon she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 5 and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. 6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. 8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom. 9 Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because Jehovah loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do justice and righteousness. 10 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices a very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

13 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own land, she and her servants.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The queen of Sheba.* Jesus called her the queen of the South, Mt. 12.42. Sheba is mentioned in Gen. 10.28; Jer. 6.20; Ezek 27.22; Is. 60.6; Ps. 72,15. See the Geographical Background.—*Heard of the fame of Solomon.* Solomon's name became known far and wide through his trading-ships; they had been to Ophir, 1 K. 9.26-28, which was probably in Arabia, and through them the queen may have heard about the great king. See ¶ 7, p. 311.—*She came.* The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here, Mt. 12.42. Her visit is mentioned in the Koran, and the Arabians and Abyssinians have many legends about it.—*Hard questions,* Riddles, Septuagint Version. See p. 309.

2. *A very great train.* .A great following, retinue.—*Spices.* Such as frankincence, myrrh, ladanum, tragacanth, cassia. "The choicest spice, frankincense, has recently been proved to be indigenous in Arabia (Yemen), and on the opposite coast of Africa; it is also spoken of as imported from Sheba, though this may mean only *through* Sheba" (*Wood*).—*Precious stones.* The onyx and the emerald are still found in her country.

4. *The house that he had built.* Read the account of it in 1 K. 7.1-12. His palace was of cedar-wood, and had three rows of windows and pillared porches. His throne was of ivory, overlaid with plates of pure gold, and there were lions on either side of the six steps which led up to it.

5. *The food of his table.* "When she saw the food perhaps she wondered where there were mouths for all that meat, but when she saw the multitude of his attendants and guests she was as ready to wonder where was the meat

for all those months" (*Matthew Henry*). In 1 K. 4.22 and 23 we are told that his provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl. It has been estimated that forty-eight thousand people must have been fed!—*The sitting of his servants.* The officers who sat at the royal table.—*The attendance.* Hebrew, *standing,* RVm.—*Their apparel.* The stately guard that lined the way when Solomon left the palace were all armed with shields of gold, and Josephus adds that the drivers of Solomon's swift horses had gold dust sprinkled in their hair every day, "so that their heads sparkled with the reflection of the sun-beams from the gold."—*Of his ministers and his cupbearers.* The servants, among them the cupbearers, in attendance on the guests. All the royal drinking vessels were of pure gold. "None was of silver", the record says, for "the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones."—*His ascent by which he went up into the house of Jehovah.* We know from 2 K. 16.18 that Solomon had a special covered approach from his palace to the Temple, and the reference is probably to this flight of steps. The margin of the RV gives another translation, *his burnt-offering which he offered in the house of Jehovah:* this would refer to the magnificent Temple rites.—*There was no more spirit in her.* She was satisfied that what she had heard about Solomon was true, and she cared not to ask further questions to prove him.

6. *And she said to the king.* "If all this good queen's appreciation, and admiration, and congratulation were absolutely sincere and without offense in the sight of God, who seeth the heart, well does she deserve all the honor that both the Old Testament and our Lord bestowed upon her" (*Whyte*).—*Acts.* Or, *sayings,* RVm.—*Wisdom.* See 1 Ch. 29.25; Prov. 3.14-18.

7. *The half was not told me.* This has become a proverbial expression. Solomon surpassed a great reputation, and the Queen of Sheba allowed her admiration to outgrow possible envy.—*Thy wisdom . . . heard.* Hebrew, *thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame,* RVm.

8. *Happy are thy men.* The later people of Israel looked back to the reign of Solomon as a time of the greatest national well-being.

9. *Blessed be Jehovah thy God.* Compare 1 K. 5.7. *Blessed* here means worthy of praise: "it is an affirmation rather than a wish."—*To do justice and righteousness.* "The denial or delay of justice is the constant complaint of the prophets later (Isa. 1.17, etc.). Where the king acts as supreme judge, his personal character influences the whole administration of justice. Psalm 72 says that the ideal Davidic king shall judge thy people with righteousness and thy poor with judgment" (*Wood*).

10. *She gave the king.* It was customary to bring gifts to a king.—*A hundred and twenty talents of gold.* In intrinsic value between three and four millions at this time, but far more in purchasing power.—*Spices.* Arabian balm was noted. Josephus declares that it was the Queen of Sheba who introduced the shrub into Palestine. Compare Isa. 60.6.

11-12. These verses are parenthetical: the mention of the gifts of the Queen of Sheba leads the writer to chronicle the articles brought to Solomon through the ships of Hiram.—*Almug-trees.* Perhaps, *sandal-wood,* RVm.—*Pillars.* Or, *a railing.* Hebrew, *a prop,* RVm.

13. *Which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.* Hebrew, *which he gave her according to the hand of King Solomon,* RVm. "The word royal is well chosen, for we think of something which is great when we apply this term to it. It is this excess of giving, beyond that which is demanded of us, which makes the real generosity" (*McKenzie*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The Queen of Sheba.* Many queens have ruled in Arabia, and several are mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. Several ancient authors speak of the riches, spices, frankincense, gold and silver mines, and precious stones of the Sabæans over whom it is believed the Queen of Sheba ruled. Pliny observes that the Sabæans use odorous wood, only, and even use the incense tree and myrrh to cook their victuals.

1. *Hard questions.* In Judges 14.12, the same Hebrew word is used in refer-

ence to Samson's riddles. According to Josephus, Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre, propounded riddles to each other, the one who failed to guess the riddle having to pay a fine. In Esdras 3 the young men of Darius' court utter "sentences" and then prove them. Many are the riddles whose solution has been ascribed to Solomon. One of the commonest is his being asked to distinguish at a distance between a bunch of natural flowers and another of artificial, which he did by having the windows opened and allowing the bees to come in, who alighted only on the natural flowers. Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie, writing in the Sunday-school Times, tells how the people of the East today delight in riddles. Learned Moslems of Tripoli visited Lebanon, Syria, to prove with hard linguistic questions Dr. Cornelius Van Dyck, the American Arabic scholar, and they left dissatisfied because the missionary "told" them; that is, answered all their questions satisfactorily. Impatient at the trying reticence of the sacred record as to the "hard questions", oriental ingenuity supplied the following tradition: Five hundred boys dressed in girls' clothes, and as many girls in boys' clothes, were presented to Solomon, with the request that he would tell which were boys and which were girls. This he unerringly did, by saying that those who tucked up their sleeves to the shoulder and washed their arms were girls, while those who merely dipped their hands in water were boys. He was requested to thread a diamond cut through in zigzags. This he did by making a worm with a thread in its mouth pass through the stone.

An Ethiopian Princess Traveling

6. *Thy wisdom.* Lange observes: To clothe wisdom in the form of proverbs, which were often dark and enigmatical on account of their brevity, is a primitive custom of the East, especially among the Arabians who are very rich in proverbs; the collection of the Meidani, for instance, which contains six thousand proverbs, and the Makami of the Hariri show this. Chapter 4 says that three thousand are by Solomon; and those in his name that are now extant include many that are enigmatical.

10. *Such abundance.* "Such gifts must have taxed in those days, the richest of the rich. It is known that some orientals part with the most precious of their possessions, and run themselves into debt, in order to excel in the display of hospitality."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What Old Testament women have we heard about this year, and for what is each one famous? Under what circumstances did Solomon ascend the throne? When told in a dream to ask what he would have, what was his choice? What commendation of his choice did he hear? What did our Golden Text for that lesson say is the beginning of wisdom? What was one of the greatest events in Solomon's life? Repeat the Golden Texts which we have had this year from the Book of Proverbs. What is a proverb?

Solomon's Commerce and Foreign Alliances. "Solomon's defensive policy was supplemented by diplomacy," writes Professor Kent in his History of the Hebrew People. "Alliances, far more than conquests, were conducive to the realization of his ambitions; accordingly, the friendly relations which had existed between Hiram of Tyre and David of Israel were cemented even more closely by his son. The Israelites had for barter the grain and wool which their trading neighbors needed; the Phœnicians, on the other hand, were in possession of the arts and products of that ancient civilization with which the Hebrews were still unfamiliar, and which was absolutely essential to the carrying out of Solomon's building enterprises; consequently, the alliance was commercial in its nature and mutually profitable to both peoples. The greater advantage naturally accrued to the Israelitish King, for his wants were more imperative. The Hebrew historian also states that Hiram of Tyre was dis-

satisfied with the cities of western Galilee, which Solomon ceded to him in return for his services (1 Kings 9.10-14). With the assistance of the artisans and sailors furnished by his Syrian ally, Solomon was able to build ships at Ezion-geber, on the Gulf of Akabah, and to send them out to engage in trade with the rich East.

"Without much doubt, the aim of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon was to establish a commercial treaty between the two peoples whom they represented; for Arabia, with its spices and precious stones, had much to export which the Hebrews were eager to secure."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Sheba was in the South, that is, south of Judea. Many scholars believe that the Queen of Sheba was queen of the Sabæans, a people of Arabia Felix, towards the southern extremity of the Arabian Peninsula. It was a journey of some fifteen hundred miles from there to Jerusalem, and by camel train would take at least seventy-five days.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Christ commended the Queen of Sheba for her search for wisdom. It has been shown that her course possessed the characteristics of all search for Divine wisdom: 1. Inquiry (verse 1); 2. Conviction (verse 4); 3. Confession (verse 6); 4. Praise (verse 9); 5. Fruit-bearing (verse 10). How far upon this course have you led your pupils?

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Read the next section, the suggestion for beginning the lesson, and adapt it for your beginning. Then expand the lesson text, by describing the journey of the Queen to Jerusalem, and giving in dialogue form the conversation between the Queen and King Solomon. Describe Solomon's palace and the way he lived and the effect all this had upon the Queen. Recall the lesson about Solomon's wise choice, and talk about his wisdom. Explain the Golden Text. Talk about some of the "Proverbs of Solomon." A soft answer turneth away wrath. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty. A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance. Go to the ant, thou sluggard. A wise son maketh a glad father. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right. Explain this last proverb as meaning that when we see what a child does, we know whether or not he is good, whether or not he is wise in that he knows what God wants him to do, and does what he knows is pleasing to God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In "Bible Characters" Dr. Alexander Whyte has a chapter about the Queen of Sheba. Here is what he says, condensed:—

The first thing that is told us concerning the Queen of Sheba is this, that she had heard in Sheba concerning the Name of the Lord. Well, it must have all come about somewhat in this way. Some of those merchantmen who went down to the Red Sea in ships, and did business for Solomon all along its shores in gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks, and almug-trees, and what not, must have had one of their ships driven in for want of fresh water near the summer palace of the Queen of Sheba. And as the seamen of Israel filled their water-pots, it was an ordinance that they should sing, saying, "Spring up, O well; in the Name of the Lord, spring up!" When who should pass by but the Queen of Sheba herself with her maidens with her? "Sing still another of the songs of Zion," she said to Solomon's sailors. At which they sang a psalm that a prophet who was in their ship had taught them to sing on the occasion of a great tempest they had just passed through. "These see," they sang, "the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and he bringeth them out of their distresses. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" And

then, at the Name of the Lord, and without being told to do it, all the seamen standing on the shore lifted up their hands to heaven and proclaimed the Name of the Lord, and worshipped, saying, "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious." And ever after that day the Queen of Sheba watched at her window for the ships of Solomon, till, above all else, the Name of the Lord took entire hold of her heart. The Queen of Sheba had lords many and gods many of her own. She and her people had their gods of the sea and their gods of the land; their gods of war and their gods of wine; their gods of the night and their gods of the day, and many more. But there was no name of any god given in Sheba that took such a hold of the Queen of Sheba's heart as did the Name of the God of Israel. At last she took a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones, and went to Jerusalem. Show Schopin's picture of The Queen at Solomon's Court, Wilde No. 488.

For Older Pupils. "Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," said Jesus as he pointed to the lilies of the field. The anemones are the "lilies of the field" in Palestine, and I was told there that the common name for these flowers is "the king lilies." How fitting it was that Jesus should compare the array of Solomon to that of "the king lily"! Perhaps it is this comparison which leads us to think more often of Solomon's glory than of anything else connected with Solomon, than even of his far-famed wisdom.

The contrast between the life of King Saul and King Solomon is startling. Saul was king of a nation of peasants; Gibeah, his capital, seems to have been but an ordinary village; in his dwelling-house he lived very simply; he himself was rude and superstitious. Solomon was king of a great nation; Jerusalem, his capital, was a walled citadel; in a magnificent palace he lived sumptuously, a typical oriental monarch. Only fifty years after Saul's death, Solomon's glory was the wonder of other eastern nations. What would Saul, fresh from his father's farm, have thought of Solomon's magnificent royal state?

Jesse sent the lad David to King Saul with a gift of loaves of bread, bottles of wine, and a kid. The Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon and brought gifts of gold, spices, and precious stones.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Hard Questions

A Hard Question from the Book of Proverbs.

Question. What are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise?

Answer. The ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their meat in the summer: the conies are but feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks: the locusts have no king yet go they forth all of them by bands: the lizard taketh hold with her hand, yet is she in kings' palaces.

The Wisdom of a Son of Solomon. According to a legend, King Menelik of Abyssinia was a descendant of King Solomon. He was noted for Solomonic wisdom. Once a man was brought before him for sentence. The man had killed another man by falling on him from a high tree while the two were gathering nuts. A branch had broken, and the accused man could not help falling, to be sure, and he had been almost killed himself in the fall, but the family of the dead man, taking advantage of the Abyssinian law, sued the survivor for "blood money", and failing that, demanded his life. King Menelik, after hearing the facts, thus decreed: "You have a right to this man's life. Very well, but the law says he shall die as his victim did. Let one of you, therefore, climb that tall fig tree, and fall on the culprit." The family of the dead man decided not to press the matter farther.

Oom Paul's Wisdom. Two brothers could not agree upon a division of their father's property. They appealed to the Boer chief magistrate to settle the matter. Oom Paul listened to both sides and then said to the older brother, "You shall divide the property into two." Then he turned to the younger brother and said, "And you shall take first choice when your brother has divided it." That would not be a bad way of settling inheritance disputes in our own land!

The Queen of Sheba's Hard Questions. What then, were the hard questions, the answers to which could be accepted as proofs of the exceptional wisdom of Solomon? We can only guess. Perhaps this was one: "In the present and in the past God has appeared for the help of his covenant people, and granted their requests as in your own experience, but what of the future? Have you any hope beyond this present life?"

Perhaps the questions may have related to those tremendous mysteries which encompass the life of every human being—the mystery of pain and sorrow, for instance, the strange disappointments and disillusionments of life; that strange mystery which forms the theme of the Book of Job, and of the thirty-seventh and the seventy-third Psalms: "Why do the righteous suffer as they do, while the unjust seem to prosper in all their ways?"

The mysteries of death, judgment, and the dark hereafter. Did the Queen of Sheba deal with those questions? Did Solomon make any attempt to answer them? Scripture does not tell us. All that we know is that for the hardest of her questions Solomon had answers which drew from her the acknowledgment that the half had not been told her concerning the wisdom of the King of Israel, and which led her to adore and bless the God of Israel. Perhaps the answer which Solomon gave to her questions on those subjects was only of this nature: "These things are in God's hands." *Condensed* from a Sermon by *Hugh H. Currie.*

Christ's Answers to Hard Questions. As Jesus has reminded us that a greater than Solomon is here, and as he has invited us to come to him with the hardest questions that perplex us, and to tell him all that is in our hearts, let us now turn from the type to the anti-type, and ask how he meets us in our difficulties, and what answer the infinitely wise Reedemer has for the questions which the best wisdom of this world could never settle.

Here is one, the dark mystery of pain and trouble and care which makes this present life so weary and dreary as it often is. Is it possible to rid ourselves of the depressing influence of care? What remedy can be found for those countless troubles and anxieties which rob us of rest and write furrows upon the brow? This is his answer: "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me."

Here is another question, the hardest that ever perplexed poor humanity, that dark mystery which adds the sharpest sting to the pains and sorrows of earth—the mystery of sin. How is a guilty sinner, trembling with dread by reason of his manifold transgression, to find peace with God, so that he may be assured that the Lord is on his side?

He is ready with the answer; "Behold in me the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world"; "God has made him who knew no sin to be sin for you."

Again there is the dark and terrible mystery of death. There is the hard question which our very nature compels us to ask, "If a man die shall he live again?" Our heart, our flesh, our soul, our reason, all that is within us, protest against the thought of death, refuse to believe that the infinite longings and ambitions of our nature are doomed to end in utter extinction after a few troubled years on earth. As Tennyson puts its, "We think we were not made to die."

Jesus is here to make all mysteries plain. Prove him with this hard question: "If a man die shall he live again?" He has brought life and immortality to light. Here is his answer, an answer with the ring of triumphant certainty in it: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Eternal life is not a thing of the future. It belongs to the Everlasting Now. "Come unto me," says Christ. "Accept the offer which I make to you and to all, whosoever will hear and obey my call, and you shall know eternal life as a present, glorious fact. For I give unto them—my sheep who hear my voice and follow me—eternal life, and they shall never perish. So shall you share my triumph over death, for, because I live ye shall live also. *Condensed* from a Sermon by *Hugh H. Currie.*

II Wisdom is Better than Rubies

The Wisdom of Solomon.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.

What does this mean? For which lesson in the First Quarter was it our Golden Text?

Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people.

This was the Golden Text for the First Quarter's Review Lesson, a text that we have every year, but it never comes amiss.

Whoso putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is better than rubies. For what lessons were these our Golden Texts? Next week we have another familiar proverb:

Pride goeth before destruction.
And a haughty spirit before a fall.

And there are four other Golden Texts from the Book of Proverbs in the lessons that follow. Probably all these proverbs did not originate with Solomon (for our Book of Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings from Solomon and from various other sources), but they are examples of wise sayings similar to those for which Solomon was noted.

The Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon have been attributed to this wise king, and now Professor Naville has written a book in which he claims that Solomon introduced into Israel the Hebrew manner of writing. If it had not been for Solomon, he believes, the student of the Old Testament would have had to master the cuneiform script. He thinks that great light has been thrown upon the finding of the Book of the Law by the customs of the Egyptians, that the Book of Deuteronomy was deposited in the wall of the Temple by Solomon, and it was in the Babylonian script, since Hilkiah was unable to read it, and that after the time of the building of the temple Solomon introduced the Hebrew letters from Phœnicia. The close intimacy with Hiram naturally brought to his notice the Phœnician writing, and, wise man that he was, he saw its superiority over the cuneiform for speed if not also for beauty.

What is Better than Wisdom? What is the most precious metal? You answer, probably, Gold. But there are at least eighteen metals which are worth more, that is, they cost more, than gold. The most expensive of all metals is a species of tin called gallium. An ounce of gallium costs ten times as much as an ounce of gold.

A ruby is more precious than gold; it costs far more. Is there any other mineral substance that is worth more than a ruby? Radium is far more costly. We can say that gallium is more costly than gold, but not that it is more valuable, for it is not used to any extent; but radium is both more costly and more valuable because of its usefulness than are rubies.

Wisdom is better than rubies. Shall we find that wisdom, like rubies and gold, has been outranked by something else? Is there any other quality which a man may possess that is of greater value? To answer this question, we must define wisdom.

First of all, by wisdom we do not mean knowledge. Knowledge signifies apprehension of facts or relations. Knowledge, as Cowper tells us, is the mere material with which wisdom builds. Wisdom always supposes action, and action directed by wisdom: knowledge may never lead to action.

Nor is wisdom prudence. Wisdom has been defined to be "the use of the best means for attaining the best ends". "Prudence is the virtue by which we select right means for given ends, while wisdom implies the selection of right ends as well as of right means." The use of the best means for attaining the best ends must include high mental and moral and spiritual excellence. It must mean ready insight into the will of God and obedience to that will. Can anything be deemed better than this, more worthy of man's highest aim?

III Wise Seekers

The Queen of Sheba a Type of Wise Seekers. The Queen of Sheba had everything that pertains to temporal prosperity and good fortune, high rank, power and honor, health and wealth; but all these satisfied not her soul; she sought the solution of the enigma of life, and when she heard of Solomon and of the name of the Lord, she spared no expense or trouble, in order to satisfy the longing of her soul for the word of life. She said not: I am rich, and have an abundance, and need nothing; but she felt that she still needed the highest and best. How superior is this heathen woman to many Christians, who hunger and thirst after all possible things, but never after a knowledge of truth and wisdom, after the word of life! We do not need to journey to Jerusalem to find him who is greater than Solomon, for he has promised: "I am with you forever, until the end of the world," and can be found everywhere, if men seek him earnestly. *Dr. Lange.*

Eager Seekers in the Arctic Regions. A missionary tells us that three Eskimo families from another camp tried to come five thousand miles over the "Barren Lands" in order to reach some one who could teach them more about the Saviour. After they had gone two-thirds of the way they turned back, starving, and only just managed to reach food in time to save their lives. Three other families came a distance of eight hundred miles for the same purpose, and succeeded in reaching the missionary after two years on the way.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Our Prayer: Behold, a greater than Solomon is here. We would be wise seekers after Divine truth, O God, and prove him with hard questions. We would come to him with everything that troubles us, and know for ourselves that it is a true report that has come to us concerning him, that the half was not told us. Happy are those servants that stand continually before him. Blessed art thou, Jehovah our God, who delighteth in him, to set him on the throne of the world.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Royal bounty. See the chapter with this title in "A Door Opened", by Dr. Alexander McKenzie.
2. The nature of wisdom and of Solomon's wisdom. See the first two Topics.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What disintegrating forces were at work during the last years of Solomon's reign? (1 K. 11.14-40; *Guide,* p. 319.) 2. Give an account of Jeroboam's revolt. (1 K. 11.26-40.) 3. What "object lesson" did the prophet Ahijah give Jeroboam which foretold the division of the kingdom? (1 K. 11.29-32.) 4. How old was Rehoboam at this time? (1 K. 14.21 and ¶ 6, p. 316.) 5. Where was Shechem and for what was it famous in Biblical history? (*Guide,* p. 321.) 6. Prov. 13.10-20 says something about wisdom which Rehoboam should have known: what is it? 7. What was the date of the division of the kingdom? (*Guide,* p. 321.) 8. What did Jesus say about a kingdom divided against itself? (Lk. 11.17.) 9. How did Rehoboam attempt to force the Northern tribes to submission, and what was the result? (1 K. 11.18-24.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of "that had stood before Solomon"? 2 What did Jesus say about his yoke? (Mt. 11.30.) 3. What is the meaning of "If thou wilt be a servant to this people this day"? (*Guide,* p. 316.) 4. Which men gave the better counsel? 5. What is meant by "the yoke that thy father did put upon us"? (*Guide,* pp. 317, 318.) 6. What is meant by "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins"? (*Guide,* p. 317.) 7. What is meant by chastising with scorpions? (*Guide,* pp. 317, 318.) 8. What is meant by "It was a thing brought about of Jehovah"? (*Guide,* p. 317.) 9. What is meant by "what portion have we in David"? (*Guide,* p. 317.) 10. Why was the cry "To your tents, O Israel"; were they living in tents at this time? (*Guide,* pp. 317, 318.) 11. What were three causes of the disruption of the Kingdom? (*Guide,* p. 320.)

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Solomon write Part IV, Solomon's Visit from the Queen of Sheba.

LESSON VI—AUGUST 8

THE KINGDOM TORN ASUNDER

Golden Text

Pride goeth before destruction
And a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16.18

LESSON I Kings 12.1-24: verses 6-16 printed
MEMORIZE verse 16

6 And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? 7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. 8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. 9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter? 10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou speak unto them, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him. 14 and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpoins. 15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

6. *The old men.* Not necessarily aged, but men of experience, the elders of the people who formed Solomon's council. Some of their names are recorded in 1 K. 4.1-6.—*That had stood before Solomon.* "To stand before a king" means to be in his service.

7. *If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day.* If you will yield to the people's will for the present; they seem to counsel fair promises rather than actual fair dealing. Yet it may have been wise, conciliatory measures which they counseled. "That is the best government which desires to make the people happy, and knows how to make them happy" (*Macaulay*). "You had better give the people some of their rights, or they may demand all of their rights," said Isidor Rayner in an address in the U. S. Senate.

8. *But he forsook the counsel of the old men.* Rehoboam was rash and arrogant, such counsel as theirs would not please him. See Prov. 13.10, 20. —*The young men that were grown up with him.* They were young as compared with the old men who had grown up with his father Solomon, but Rehoboam was at this time forty-one years old according to 1 K. 14.21, though the Septuagint Version gives his age as twenty-one (another version as six-

teen). He and his companions were certainly young in wisdom if not in years. Their answer better befits domineering and self-confident twenty-one than cooler and saner forty-one.

9. *The yoke that thy father did put upon us.* Compare the words of the people, verse 4. The *yoke* was an emblem of servitude: compare Jesus' words in Mt. 11.30. The people had been heavily taxed by Solomon, and forced labor had been required. Recall Samuel's prophecy when the people demanded their first king, 1 S. 8.10-18, and read 1 K. 4.7, 22-26; 5.11-18, to see how Solomon's extravagant court and his immense buildings must have impoverished the people. See p. 319.

10. *My little finger is thicker than my father's loins.* This was a proverbial expression, and means, as used by Rehoboam, I am as much greater than my father, and my demands will be as much greater than his, as the thigh is bigger than the little finger.

11. *Lade.* Load, burden.—*Scorpions.* This word is usually interpreted to mean a lash used in scourging, having sharp stones or metal points whose sting probably gave it this name. "The same name is said to have been given by the Romans to an implement of flagellation. It is described by Ephrem Syrus as a long bag of leather, stuffed with sand, and provided with spikes" (*Skinner*). "Such a scourge might be called a 'scorpion', just as one that tears, like cat's claws, is called the 'cat'" (*Wood*). See p. 318. The whole expression is plainly a figure of speech, and the comparison evidently means that the suffering his father caused may be compared to a blow with a small whip, while the suffering he will cause will be as severe as the sting of a scorpion. "The possession of unlimited power will make a despot of almost any man. There is a possible Nero in the gentlest human creature that walks" (*Thomas Bailey Aldrich*).

12-13. *All the people.* Representatives of all the people.—*As the king bade.* Verse 5.—*The king answered the people roughly.* The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answereth roughly, Prov. 18.23.

15. *A thing brought about of Jehovah.* In Hebrew thought, every unusual occurrence was brought about by the direct agency of God. Rehoboam was not forced into his foolish and wicked decision, yet it was in accordance with the Divine will. "Here the historian draws back the curtain. On earth stood the insolent king and the now mutinous people, each driving at their ends, and neither free of sin in their selfishness. A stormy scene of passion, without thought of God, rages below, and above sits the Lord, working his great purpose by men's sin. The greatest crime in the world's history, Calvary, was at the same time the accomplishment of God's most merciful purpose" (*Maclaren*). For the Divine purpose, see ¶ 7, p. 323.—*That he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah to Jeroboam.* Read 1 K. 11.26-40.

16. *All Israel.* The ten Northern tribes.—*The people answered the king.* A soft answer turneth away wrath, but a grievous word stirreth up anger, Prov. 15.1.—*What portion have we in David?* What concern, or interest, have we in the house of David? Compare the similar words of Sheba, 2 S. 20.1: these were the old words of open rebellion.—*Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.* David was the son of Jesse, Rehoboam was the grandson. The expression means, We do not belong to David's household, for we are not of the tribe of Judah. The old jealousy of the Northern tribes toward the tribe of Judah, David's tribe, had smoldered during the reigns of David and Solomon, and now it broke forth anew.—*To your tents, O Israel.* They no longer lived in tents, but they used the old phrase of dismissal used by their forefathers when on the march through the wilderness. See p. 318. Let us forswear allegiance to Rehoboam, they mean; let us go home, and manage our own affairs.—*Now see to thine own house, David.* Rule over your own tribe, O descendant of David, as you will; you can not rule over us.—*So Israel departed unto their tents.* A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, Lk. 11.17.

17-24. In an evident attempt to carry out his threat, recorded in verse 14, Rehoboam sent Adoram, a taskmaster, to quell the Northern tribes, but they stoned him to death. Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and there gathered an army, but was warned by God through Shemiah not to fight against his

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brethren in the North, and he gave up the attempt. Meanwhile the Northern tribes had sent for Jeroboam and made him their king.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *If thou wilt be a servant unto this people.* I have read that there once lived in Japan a good king so anxiously concerned for the welfare of his people that he set a drum at the palace gate, and gave directions that whoever had any wrong to be redressed, or any want, should beat the drum, promising that at once, by day or by night, he would grant the suppliant an audience and relief. But throughout the land there was such prosperity and contentment that none needed to appeal for anything, and the birds built their nests within the drum, and filled it with the music of their song.

9. *The yoke that my father did put upon you.* The yoke worn by the oxen was a clumsy, heavy affair, very galling, wearing off the hair and often making sores, hence it was a fit emblem of oppression and servitude. Forced labor was a part of the yoke that Solomon put upon his people. In the construction of the Panama Canal, great expense and pains were taken to make conditions in the Zone sanitary and safe for the men engaged in its construction. But it was less than fifty years ago that the Suez Canal was completed, and it was dug with little thought for the workmen, and chiefly by the forced labor of the fellahin, the lowest class of laborers in Egypt.

In a deep rock cutting high above the railway that now leads to Damascus, a Latin inscription praises the Roman Emperor and the Prefect under whose auspices the ancient aqueduct and chariot-road were constructed, but beneath, in differently shaped letters which were evidently filled in with cement and concealed from that Prefect's eyes, are two words that speak volumes—*Impensis Abilenetorum,* At the cost of the people of Abilene!

10. *And the young men that were grown up with him.* Dr. Clarke points out that it was customary in various countries to educate with the heir to the throne young noblemen of nearly the same age. This accomplished two purposes: "It excited the prince to emulation, that he might, as far as possible, surpass in their manly exercises, and in all acts of prudence and virtue, those whom one day he was to surpass in the elevation and dignity of his state: and also that he might acquire a correct knowledge of the disposition and views of those who were likely to be, under him, the highest officers of the state, and know the better how to trust and employ them. The old counsellors Rehoboam did not know, with the young nobility he had been familiar."

11. *Scorpions.* Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly,* gives as one of the earliest recollections of his life in Syria, the grabbing of something on the floor which turned out to be a scorpion. The fiery sting pierced under his thumb nail, and he rolled on the floor, a ball of quivering flesh, with a dart of the bitterest fiery pain, which never abated the whole night. "I feel no hesitancy in saying," he adds, "that when Rehoboam said to the people of Israel, 'My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions,' he made a telling figure, and the people of that country, which is full of all manner of creeping things, must have understood him very clearly."

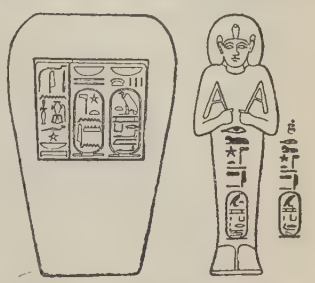
13. *The king forsook the counsel of the old men.* Rehoboam thereby sinned against custom. In the East vastly greater reverence has always been paid to age than in the West. At the present time it is the old men who settle affairs of state in the Arab tribes.

16. *To your tents, O Israel.* The tent was the symbol of the free, simple life of patriarchal times. In the language of poetry and prophecy, it has a meaning and a dignity that the house never had. Dr. G. M. Mackie, in "Bible Manners and Customs", speaks of the reluctance with which today those leave it who have been brought up in the tent. "It is socially a degradation in their eyes, and personally a sacrifice of preference. A few years ago the young wife of a Bedouin sheik in Damascus died of longing for the life she had left behind her. Her heart was with the gatherings around the well, the camels and the kids about the tent, and all the simple free life of the wilderness."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the first king of the Israelites? On his death what two kings ruled for seven and a half years, each over part of the kingdom? What led to this division of the kingdom? What tribes belonged to each division? What led the Northern tribes to choose David as their king, too? How long did David reign? What sort of king was he? Who was his successor? Who had foretold great injustice and suffering which would come upon the people through their king? What two instances of great friendships have we studied? What was the influence upon Ruth of her friendship for Naomi? What influence had David's and Jonathan's friendship upon each other? How was David guided by Jonathan's counsels?

Solomon's Downfall. We have seen Solomon begin his reign under the happiest auspices. He started well, acknowledging his inexperience and asking wisdom in guiding his people. Next he built the Temple, and dedicated it with a beautiful prayer. He became famous for his riches and his wisdom. His last years were a contradiction of his first. His "enthusiasm for humanity was supplanted by enthusiasm for money", and it came to pass, when he was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, 1 K. 11.4. "Solomon's fatal weakness was for wives," says Dr. van Dyke in "Sermons to Young Men." "One of his chief objects was to increase his political influence by contracting alliances with the princesses of surrounding nations. He went on adding to his burdens and entanglements, every month bringing a new princess into the royal household, and every princess bringing a new god, until at length he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Hated by his people for the heavy burdens of taxation which he was forced to lay upon them for the support of his costly household, turned hither and thither by wives who neither understood his wisdom nor cared for his greatness, but only for his gold, worshipping at the shrines of a hundred gods, in none of which he believed—what an old age is this. It is the very mockery of greatness, the supreme irony of fate, that the hoary head of the wisest of monarchs should be crowned by his own hands with the cap of a fool. And all this because he did not understand that to guide one's own life is a harder and more perilous task than to rule a kingdom."



Funeral Vase and Figure of a Servant of Queen Karamat, now in Berlin. Karamat was a Sister of Solomon's Wife.

Jeroboam's Revolt. The Queen of Sheba had greatly admired Solomon's magnificent buildings, but forced labor was required to build his vast palaces and fortifications, and a heavy tax was imposed on the people to support them and his army.

During the latter part of his reign rebellion was rife. Jeroboam, a humble man in the tribe of Ephraim, came to Jerusalem and by his intelligence and enterprise gained for himself an important place in Solomon's building force. He was placed over the levy of his own tribesmen, who were engaged in building the fortifications of Millo, a great tower of the citadel. Angered by their oppression, and ambitious for his own advancement, Jeroboam headed a revolt against King Solomon.

Meanwhile, the prophet Ahijah came to Jeroboam with a startling message. Taking a new piece of cloth, Ahijah tore it into twelve pieces and handed ten of them to Jeroboam. This symbolic act meant, as he explained, that Israel was to be punished for neglecting God, the kingdom would be divided after Solomon's death, and Jeroboam should rule over ten tribes.

Unlike David, Jeroboam was not willing to await the appointed time. His revolt was quelled and he was forced to flee to Egypt where he was well received by Shishak, the Pharaoh.

Solomon's Successor. Saul and David had been made king by representatives of the people, while Solomon had been chosen by his father. Prece-

dent had not yet decreed that the throne was hereditary. On the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam was probably crowned at Jerusalem before he went to Shechem to have his sovereignty acknowledged by the tribes who were on the verge of revolt.

The Causes of the Disruption of the Kingdom under Rehoboam. Who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Ecclesiastes questions, and our lesson shows how far from being a wise man was Rehoboam. His arrogant folly was the immediate cause, the last straw, one might say, that brought about the division of the kingdom. The final result of the division is given in ¶s 4 and 5, p. 32.

Supposed R presentation of Rehoboam

A deeper lying cause of the disruption lay in the Northern tribes' jealousy of Judah, for whose aggrandizement all their labor at Jerusalem went. This jealousy was of long standing, and the two kingdoms had never been one at heart. In early Hebrew history the Northern tribes had been the leaders. In the time of the Judges a strong line of Canaanitish strongholds, of which Jebus (later called Jerusalem), was the chief, extended east and west across the land of Canaan, separating the Northern from the Southern tribes. The Ephraimites, as representatives of the tribe of Ephraim (which had been divided into the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in order to secure for it a double portion in the original distribution of the land), had claimed pre-eminence. Within their territory was Shiloh, the early sanctuary. When David became King the sanctuary was removed to Jerusalem and the supremacy passed to Judah. There had been fitful outbursts of jealousy during David's reign, but it was kept in check by the enthusiasm engendered by his military enterprises and by his powerful diplomatic rule. It had grown stronger during Solomon's reign, for his interest was centered in Judah and Jerusalem. Now there was neither a diplomatic nor a strong hand to keep it under.

A third cause is thus traced by Alfred Jeremias (in The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East);—The division of the Kingdom was certainly not the result of international strife only. External powers had assuredly some hand in it. In the first place, the Pharaoh Shoskenk would be interested in weakening the mightiest of the Syrian states. The marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh Psusennes II, for whom a wonderful palace was built, had a political reason. In the history of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who was brought up in the court of the Pharaoh, and who according to a tradition which appears in the Septuagint Version of I K. 12.24. was married to a sister-in-law of Pharaoh, we find traces of the recognized Egyptian policy of dallying with aspirants to the throne of allied states. The rulers of the Nile and the Euphrates preferred having the small vassal states in dependence upon each other. This simplified the levying of tribute. We know from 1 K. 15.18 that Rehoboam relied upon Damascus. Damascus had certainly already been at work behind the scenes in the wars between Jeroboam and Rehoboam, and was *tertius gaudens* in the dividing of the kingdom.

Date of the Division of the Kingdom. A date given in the Assyrian inscriptions, 854 B.C. was in the reign of Ahab. Reckoning back from this, the time of the division of the Israelites into two Kingdoms falls somewhere

between 938 and 916 B.C. (the sixty-two years' reign of Ahab's predecessors being added either to the beginning or to the end of Ahab's twenty-one years' reign). The date usually accepted is 937 B.C. Dr. G. A. Smith says 933 B.C., assigning Rehoboam's reign over Judah from 933 to 917 B.C.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jerusalem, which had been the capital of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon, after the division was the capital of Judah. Review ¶ 5, p. 239.

Shechem, where the great convocation was held when the Northern tribes revolted from Rehoboam, became the capital of the Northern Kingdom. It is twenty-nine miles north of Jerusalem, at the foot of Mount Gerizim. From the time that Abraham came to the place called Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh, until Jesus had his famous conversation at the well with the woman of Samaria, not far from Shechem, it has been an important place in Biblical history. Assign ¶s 147, 148 of "In the Master's Country."

After the division, the territory of Israel was nearly three times as large as that of Judah (Israel, 9,400 square miles; Judah 3,400). West of the Jordan it included sovereignty over the territory of Jerusalem, and the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulum, Naphtali, Dan and Asher, extending as far north as Mount Hermon; east of the Jordan it included the tribes of Reuben and Gad and suzerainty over the territory of Moab. Its land was far more fertile than Judah's; to it belonged the rich plain of Jezreel and the wooded hills of Ephraim and Carmel. Its highways were traversed by traders from the adjacent lands, and its people became very prosperous.

The Kingdom of Judah included that of the tribe of Simeon south of it and a part of the tribe of Benjamin. The Levites in the Northern Kingdom very early came to Jerusalem to live. It fell heir to the nominal control of Edom and to the wealth of Jerusalem and the military resources accumulated during David's and Solomon's reigns, and to the renown that belonged to the house of David. Small in extent, in close touch with the desert rather than with the adjoining nations, it was politically of far less importance than the Northern Kingdom, and its rocky, barren hills produced an austere people.

Let your pupils draw the map of the Divided Kingdom and in the Kingdom of Judah write the name of Rehoboam and the date of his reign.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

In our lessons about Ruth and Naomi, and David and Jonathan, your pupils have seen the beauty and the helpfulness of friendship, the wise counsels and their ready acceptance which one gains who has the right kind of friends. In our lessons about Samson and Saul and Absalom there has been many a suggestion about the influence of evil friends. That is the dominant note in today's theme. Have you given much thought to the kind of friends your pupils have? Is your teaching leading them to choose as their chums those whose influence makes for good?

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

You know that parrots can talk, but did you ever hear of a talking crow? A young crow can be taught to speak as well as a parrot, if the one who teaches him has a great deal of patience. An artist once had a tame crow that would follow him over his lawn and keep calling, "Ah, come off! Ah, come off!" People always laughed on hearing the crow, and the bird became very proud of being able to talk. Its pride brought it into trouble, for his master became tired of hearing him and often would shut him up alone in some dark place in order to keep him quiet. What does our Golden Text today say?

After a talk about the meaning of the text, tell how Rehoboam's pride and haughty spirit brought him into trouble. Show a picture of Rehoboam, Thompson No. 157b. Describe the great meeting at Shechem so that your pupils can see it. Give in dialogue form the conversation between the King and the gray-haired old men, and between the King and the younger men, and then between the King and the people. Portray the scene of excitement as the

people from the North departed, refusing to have Rehoboam for their king. Let your pupils see that had Rehoboam listened to the old men who knew much more than he did, or, what would have been far better, had he asked God what to do, he would not have spoken so roughly to his people, but would have agreed to make their burdens lighter instead of harder; then he would not have lost the greater part of his kingdom. Talk about heeding good counsel, and tell what happened to the butterfly that threw away good advice, below.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When Solomon was made King of Israel, how did he feel in regard to his responsibility? For what did he pray? When Victoria, at the age of seventeen, was told that she was to become Queen of England, she exclaimed, "Oh! won't you pray for me that I may be wise and good?" Solomon's son and successor has now come to the throne, and he was very different from Solomon and Victoria on their accession. He did not care about ruling his people wisely nor righteously. What was his name?

For Older Pupils. Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary was only eighteen when he began to rule an empire of nine hostile nationalities, two of whom, Hungary and Northern Italy, were already in rebellion and his capital, Vienna, had just been rescued from the Austrian insurgents. The keynote of his long reign was sounded in the proclamation which he issued upon his accession: "We trust that with God's aid and in common with our peoples we shall succeed in uniting all the countries and races of the monarchy in one great body politic." This he has accomplished by his wise, beneficent rule. All the various nationalities that compose his Empire have buried their old hostility, for his reign at least, because of their unbounded loyal devotion to their Emperor. It is because he has been a servant unto them that they became his servants forever. His attitude upon his accession as well as its result is a great contrast to that of the young King of Israel who succeeded Solomon upon the throne.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I With the Well-Advised is Wisdom

Rehoboam's Folly. Rehoboam's first mistake was in asking the advice of anyone. His own heart should have told him that the request of the people was just and right, and instead of asking for three days' delay he should have answered at once, "I will make your yoke lighter." The people would have made the valley ring with their joyous shouts and "Hail to the King!" It is always a mistake to consult others about a plain duty.

His second mistake was in following the wrong advice. He turned from the counsel of the old men to that of the young men which was in harmony with his own desires—to get all he could and give nothing.

Good Advice Thrown Away. In the window a butterfly was fluttering upwards and downwards and crossways, and when it was tired of flying, it crept and crawled awhile. It was seeking a way out into the bright air and the beds of flowers, and could not find one, or understand how it was held in prison. Every time it reached the top of the window the butterfly grazed with its wings the web of an old gray spider, who sat very quietly in a crevice of the wall.

While the butterfly rested for a moment on the window-sill, a house-fly alighted near him.

"Why are you spending your time in this dingy old window?" asked the fly.

"Because I cannot get out", answered the butterfly.

"Certainly", rejoined the fly, "you can't fly through glass; but if you will turn round, and fly down a little way, you will find an open door. Then you may be outside in two or three shakings of your wings."

The spider let itself down from its corner by a silvery thread, and joined in the talk; but the fly did not stay to listen. He didn't care for conversation with spiders.

"May I ask what the fly was saying to you?" the spider asked the butterfly. The butterfly told him.

"That is right", said the spider softly. "Be brave and determined, and you

will find or make your way somehow. Don't listen to flies. They are wretched creatures. So sly and cunning and crafty. Never trust a fly."

I looked again in the evening. The butterfly was fastened in the gray web, and the spider was wrapping round him strong, silvery cords. The fly hovered near, and I heard him say:

"So! the butterfly for supper? My counsel was despised. Well, I suppose butterflies listen only to the advice which pleases them. What a pity this one wouldn't even try whether the advice was right and good!" *Condensed* from *The Wonderful River,* by *John A. Hamilton.*

II Pride Goeth Before Destruction And a Haughty Spirit Before a Fall.

Rehoboam's Haughty Spirit. Just by one insolent and swaggering word King Rehoboam lost for ever the ten tribes of Israel. And all Rehoboam's insane and suicidal history is written in our Bibles for the admonition and instruction of all hot-blooded, ill-natured, and insolent-spoken men among ourselves.

My children and I were reading in the best story book in the world, Plutarch, and having Rehoboam in my mind, we came upon this about Coriolanus: "But he was so choleric, and so impatient, that he would yield to no living creature; which made him churlish, uncivil, and altogether unfit for any man's conversation. They could not be acquainted with him as a citizen careth to be with another in the city. His behavior was so unpleasant to them by reason of a certain insolent and stern manner he had, which, because it was too lordly, was disliked. And, to say truly, the greatest benefit learning bringeth men unto is this: that it teaches them that be rude and rough of nature—by compass and rule of reason, to be civil and courteous, and to like better the mean state than the higher. But Martius was a man too full of passion and choler, and too much given over to self-will and opinion, and lacked the gravity and affability that is gotten with judgment of learning and reason. He remembered not how wilfulness is the thing of all the world which the governor of a state should shun. For a man who wishes to live in this world must needs have patience which lusty bloods (like Rehoboam's young counselors) make but a mock at." Reading the same charming book another wet morning we came on this: "Now, Cæsar immediately won many men's good-will at Rome through his eloquence in pleading their causes, and the people loved him marvellously also because of the courteous manner he had to speak with every man, and to use them gently, being more ceremonious therein than was looked for in one of his years. How little account Cæsar made of his diet, this example doth prove it. Supping one night in Milan with his friend Valerius Leo, there was served asparagus to his board and oil of perfume put into it instead of salad oil. Cæsar simply ate it and found no fault, but reproved his friends who were offended: and told them that it had been enough to have abstained to eat of that they misliked, and not to shame their friend, and how much he lacked good manners who found fault with his friend." The whole chapter, indeed, is one of Plutarch's masterpieces. *Condensed* from *Bible Characters,* by *Dr. Whyte.*

Kept from a Fall. God's defences are often disguised under the form of life's limitations. For instance, there is mediocrity—the possession of but two talents—and the consequent necessity of living a commonplace life. Against this state of things we are often inclined to chafe in envy of our seemingly more favored friends, but in reality it may be God's defence in the midst of which he has set us for our safe protection. Had we been otherwise circumstanced and more richly endowed, it is possible that headstrong pride might have been our ruin, and that we might have been lifted up to our own destruction. *J. Stuart Holden,* in *Redeeming Vision.*

III It was a Thing Brought about of Jehovah

Why was the Division of the Kingdom brought about by God? It was the beginning of disasters that culminated in the overthrow of both Kingdoms. In a little over two centuries the Northern tribes were carried off into captivity by the Assyrians and one hundred and thirty-six years later the Kingdom of

Judah came to an end at the hands of the Babylonians. During the century that followed the death of Solomon Egypt was weak and Assyria was inactive, and had the tribes of the Israelites remained united they might have become a great Jewish Empire, powerful enough to absorb the other Kingdoms along the Mediterranean. Why, then, was this crisis, so far-reaching in its baneful effects, brought about by God? The Israelites were God's chosen people, and their peculiar mission was not to attain political success, but to receive and transmit high spiritual blessing. Political success meant oriental despotism and idolatry. Political failure meant the rule of the prophets rather than that of the Kings. "It was only in the furnace of affliction that those perverse, insignificant Canaanitish tribes were prepared for the reception of their commission. Approaching captivity led their prophets to open wider their spiritual eyes until they beheld, instead of a local God, of one little nation, a Lord supreme in the affairs of men and in the universe. Out of the depths of their private and national woe, those divinely enlightened men caught glimpses of the character of the Eternal and of his purposes which enabled them to rise above national annihilation and exile, and to give to their nation and the world hopes and truths and principles which are the eternal foundations of religious faith. Thus, while by the Disruption the Hebrew nation lost its life, in a truer and higher sense it found it, and was prepared in turn to transmit this life and hope to humanity. *Charles Foster Kent,* in *Biblical World.*

Thus it Will Be. Let us not be disturbed in heart. The affairs of the world will be carried on in future, as they have been in the past, by the foolishness of man and the wisdom of God. *Wordsworth.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Our Prayer: Keep thou us from presumptuous sins, O God. For unkind words and deeds that have their rise in a haughty spirit, for wilful blindness to the rights and needs of others, for unwillingness to be well-advised, for sinning against the clear light of conscience and thy Word, we beseech thy forgiveness. Our folly is heavy upon us, the folly of trusting in our own wisdom. Do thou guide and direct our ways, O Counselor, all-wise and all-loving.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

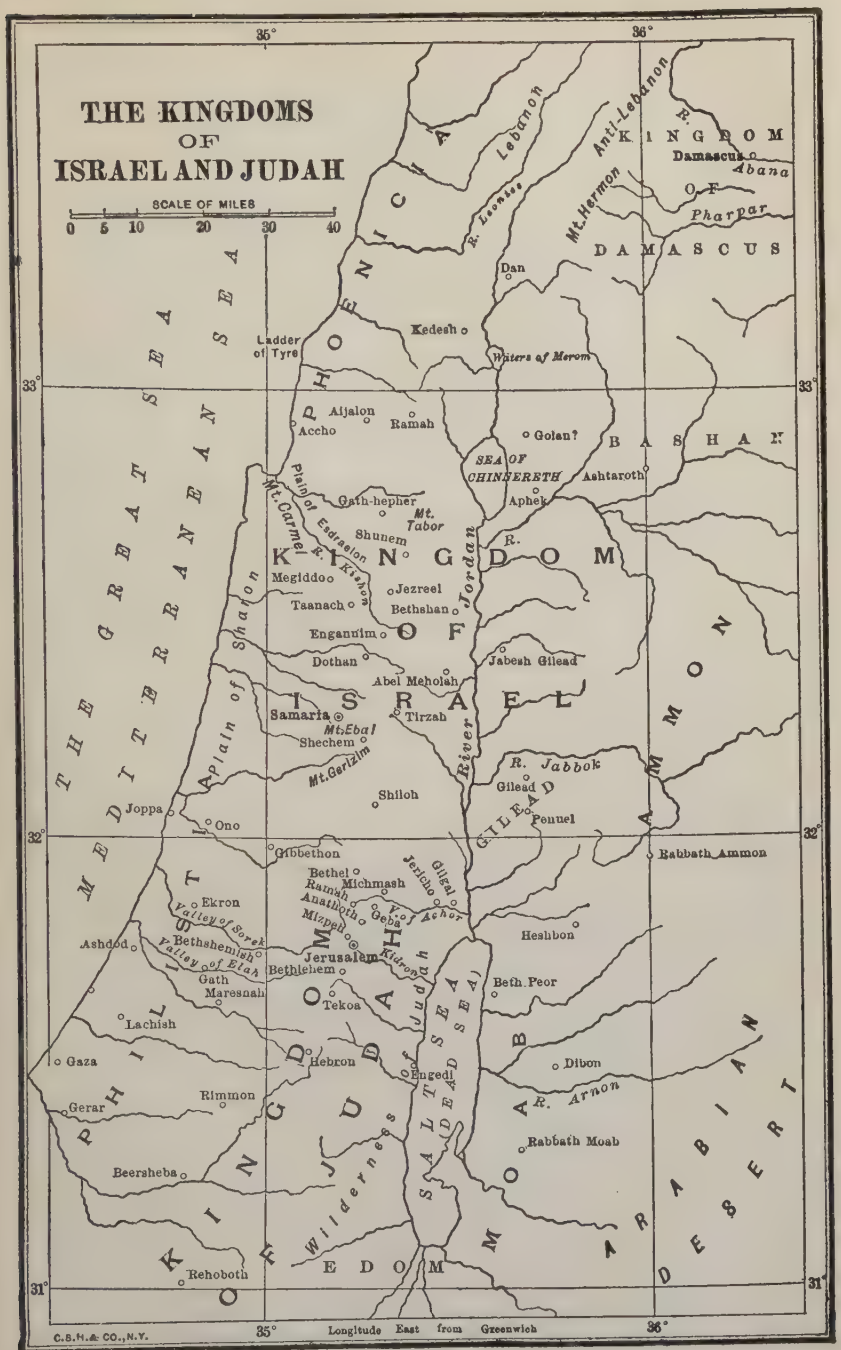
1. God in History. See the Third Topic; God in Great World Movements, *Methodist Quarterly Review,* Oct., 1909.
2. Protests against autocracy.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How was civil war prevented after the disruption of the Kingdom? (1 K. 12.21-24.) 2. What befell Rehoboam after he lost the Northern tribes? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 328.) 3. What promise had been made to Jeroboam and what was the condition? (1 K. 11.35-38.) 4. Where was Penuel? (*Guide,* p. 329.) 5. For what is Penuel famous in Biblical history? (Gen. 32.22-31.) 6. Where were Bethel and Dan, and why were they suitable for Jeroboam's purpose? (*Guide,* p. 329.) 7. What feast is referred to in verse 32? (Bible reference.) 8. How often were the Israelites in the habit of going to Jerusalem for feasts? (Ex. 23.14-17.) 9. What change did Jeroboam make in the date of the feast? (Lev. 23.39.) 10. What did Aaron say to the people when he presented the golden calf to them? (Ex. 32.4.) 11. What did Assurbanipal do to prevent the hearts of his people from turning to Babylonia? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 327.)

Questions to Think About. 1. How did Jeroboam show shrewdness? 2. How did he show hypocrisy? 3. How did he pay too dear a price for power? 4. Was it wrong for Jeroboam to "make priests from among the people"? 5. Did Jeroboam break the First Commandment? 6. Who was the first man to make a golden calf for the Hebrew people, and what was his reason for making it? 7. What idols are worshipped in our land today?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Proverbs 15.1; 13.10. In your Life of Solomon write Part V, Solomon's Last Days. Begin the Lives of Kings of Judah, and write an account of How Rehoboam Lost the Greater Part of his Kingdom. Draw an outline map of Palestine, and divide it into the two kingdoms, naming each.



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JEROBOAM LEADS ISRAEL INTO SIN

Golden Text

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them. Exodus 20. 4, 5a.

LESSON I Kings 12.25-33 MEMORIZE verses 28, 29

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; for the people went *to worship* before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places that he had made. 33 And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

25. *Jeroboam built Shechem and Penuel.* The cities had long been in existence: Jeroboam rebuilt, fortified, adorned them. It has been noted that Mesha on the Moabite Stone uses the same expression in regard to all the towns which he restored.—*He went from thence.* This may mean that he transferred his seat of government from Shechem to Penuel, or that he made Penuel a military center. Recall the lesson that Jacob learned at Penuel, Gen. 32.22-31.

27. *The house of Jehovah at Jerusalem.* The Temple was evidently now regarded as the chief place of worship, and the people came there from all over the land to celebrate the great religious feasts.—*Their lord.* Rehoboam, the descendant of their great kings, Solomon and David. Jeroboam feared that the religious union would eventually lead to the political union of the two kingdoms.

28. *The king made two calves of gold.* "He would not be at the charge of building a golden temple as Solomon had done: two golden calves are the most he can afford" (*Matthew Henry*). "They were regarded as figures of Jehovah under the well-understood and universally adopted emblem of a young bull, the symbol of fertility and strength. Some have fancied that Jeroboam was influenced by his Egyptian reminiscences. This is an obvious error. In Egypt, *living* bulls were worshipped, not idol-figures. It is true that later prophets and poets, like Hosea and the Psalmist, spoke in scorn of his images as mere 'calves', and spoke of him as likening his Maker to 'an ox that eateth hay', Tobit 1.5. They even came in time to regard them as figures of Baal and Astarte, but this view is falsified by the entire annals of the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam was, and always regarded himself as, a worshipper of Jehovah" (*Farrar*).—*Unto them.* The Northern tribes.—*It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.* Or, *Ye have gone up long enough,* RVm. Note his hypocrisy. From Shechem it is only forty miles to Jerusalem.—*Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought*

thee up out of the land of Egypt. These images were to be worshipped as symbols of Jehovah. Compare the words of Aaron in Ex. 32.4, when he presented the golden calf to the children of Israel in the wilderness. There is no indication that Jeroboam knew how Aaron was denounced and punished for his deed, as recorded in Ex. 32. The word *gods* is plural because there were two images. "Jeroboam knew how stupid his people were, as well as how superstitious. He knew well, also, how party spirit and ill-will had all along prevailed between Samaria and Jerusalem; and, the bad man that he was, he deliberately set himself to traffic, and to establish his throne, in the stupidity and in the ill-will of his hoodwinked subjects" (*Whyte*). For Jeroboam's guilt see the First and Second Topics.

29. *In Bethel and in Dan.* At the two ends of his kingdom: the people in the north worshipped at Dan and those in the south, at Bethel.

30. *This thing became a sin.* This sin of Jeroboam, which caused Israel to sin, is referred to twenty-three times in the Books of the Kings.—*Before the one.* Or, *each of them,* RVm.

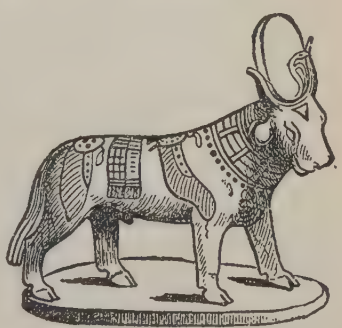
31. *He made houses of high places.* He erected temples or places of worship upon the high places. See p. 476.—*Made priests from among all the people.* "From all the people indiscriminately;" according to the law of Dt. only the Levites could be priests.—*That were not of the sons of Levi.* The Levites in Jeroboam's territory had withdrawn to Jerusalem, 2 Ch. 11.13, 14; 13.9. From the fact that David, unrebuked, made his sons priests; that Ira the Ithrite was a priest; that Solomon, by his own fiat, altered the succession of the priesthood and that he as well as Jeroboam arrogated to themselves priestly functions on public occasions, it is natural to conclude with Dr. Farrar and others that the opinion as to the priestly rights on which others might infringe may not have existed in the days of Jeroboam, or only in an infinitely weaker form than in the days of the post-exilic chronicler.

32. *Like unto the feast that is in Judah.* The Feast of Tabernacles, which was held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, Lev. 23.34. Jeroboam probably placed his feast a month later because the harvest was later in his northern territory.—*And he offered upon the altar.* An aggravation of his guilt. "His residence in Egypt might have made the union of the kingly and priestly functions familiar to him."

33. *He went up unto the altar.* Or, *Offered upon,* RVm. He took upon himself the duties of the priest.—*Of his own heart.* Another reading is, *apart,* RVm.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

27. *Then will the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord.* It is interesting in this connection to recall the fact that Assurbanipal, king of Assyria 668-626 B.C. (the great and noble Asnapper of Ezra 4.10) founded the royal library which has preserved for us so valuable a collection of the best Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, not from love of literature but in order to prevent the young Assyrians, from going down to Babylon to be educated, "where treasonable ideas would be instilled into their minds by the priests of Babylon, who were always in patriotic opposition to Assyria."



Bronze Figure of the Egyptian God Apis

29. *He set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.* Dean Stanley recalls the similar policy of Abder-Rahman, Caliph of Spain, in arresting the movement of his subjects to Mecca by erecting a Holy Place of the Zeca at Cordova; and of Abdel-Malek in building the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, because he had quarreled with the authorities at Mecca and did not wish his people to go there.

Dr. Van Lennep tells us that the Druses of northern Syria possess a brazen calf which they claim they keep only as a caricature of their first teacher, El Dorazi, who lived eight hundred years ago, after whom they are called Druses,

and whom they hold as inferior to Hamzi, another of their teachers. "It is well known, however", he adds, "that there are no greater liars in the world than the Druses, and that their books enjoin secrecy respecting their tenets. It is highly probable that the golden calf having been long worshipped in Upper Palestine, brazen copies of it have from time to time been found among the ruins of the country, and these have gradually come to be regarded with superstitious reverence."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was Jeroboam? What ability had he which Solomon recognized? What ambitious dreams had long possessed him? Where did he flee from Solomon and why? Whom did he marry in Egypt? What did we hear about idolatry in the time of the Judges? What were the high places? When was worship in these places forbidden? Why? What idolatrous shrines had Solomon erected?

Rehoboam and the Kingdom of Judah. After the division of the Kingdom, Rehoboam heeded the advice of the prophets, and prospered for a time as King over the Kingdom of Judah, building and fortifying many cities. In the fifth year of his reign the Egyptian King, Shishak, invaded Jerusalem, despoiled the Temple, taking away the shields of gold which had to be replaced with shields of brass, and shattered Rehoboam's power. The cause is pointed out by the prophet Shemaiah: Thus saith Jehovah, ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak. First Kings 14.30 says that there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually, and it was formerly supposed that Shishak was on friendly terms with Jeroboam, who had been for several years a refugee at the Egyptian Court, and had instigated Shishak to invade Judah. But recent decipherment of the list of places which Shishak claimed to have conquered according to the inscription he caused to be made upon the walls of the court he erected in the temple of Karnak at Thebes, shows that included among them were some cities in the northern Kingdom as well. Our illustration shows the figure of Shishak, represented in gigantic proportion to indicate his station and fame, grasping in one hand the ends of ropes which pass around the necks of long rows of captives whose arms are tied behind them. Attached to the heads of the prisoners are ovals on which are graven the names of conquered cities. Rehoboam reigned seventeen years and was succeeded on his death by his son.

Shishak with Prisoners of War

Jeroboam and the Kingdom of Israel. The Northern Tribes having rebelled at Shechem and refused to have anything further to do with Rehoboam, at once elected Jeroboam as their King. He was the mighty man of valor, very industrious, whom Solomon had given charge over all the labor of the house of Joseph, but when Solomon learned that the prophet Ahijah had foretold that Jeroboam should be King over part of his Kingdom, Solomon sought to kill him. Jeroboam escaped by fleeing to Egypt and remaining there till Solomon's

death. Whether he returned before or after the convocation at Shechem is not clear. The Northern Kingdom over which he ruled is henceforth known as the Kingdom of Israel.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Although Jeroboam made Shechem his capital, he soon removed to Tirzah, a few miles northeast of Shechem, 1 King 14.17; 15.21, 33. For Shechem see the last lesson. Penuel was east of the Jordan on the northern bank of the Jabbok, probably on a caravan road leading through Gilead to Damascus, and therefore Jeroboam fortified it against attack. It is mentioned in Gen. 32.31 and Judges 8.8.

Bethel was near the southern border of Jeroboam's Kingdom, only twelve miles north of Jerusalem. Here Abraham and Jacob had worshipped, and it had been the home of the prophet Samuel. Its name means "House of God", for it was here that Jacob slept and dreamed when on his way to Padam-Aram. The fact is pointed out by Dr. G. A. Smith that Bethel, besides possessing more ancient religious associations than Jerusalem, stood near the junction of two trade routes, and the great festival at harvest time which Jeroboam instituted there would also be a great fair and would attract, by its double temptation, numbers of traders from Judah.

Dan was in the extreme northern end of Jeroboam's Kingdom, near one of the sources of the Jordan. It had been a "holy city" in the time of the Judges; a graven image there was worshipped under the offices of a Levitical priest, a grandson of Moses (Judges 18.26-31).

Have these places located on the map which your pupils have made of the Divided Kingdom.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

In teaching this lesson make sure that your pupils see how disloyal to God King Jeroboam was, how he dishonored him by giving the people the two calves to represent God who can not be seen.

Recall last week's lesson and draw on the board the sketch map on p. 337. Locate Jerusalem, where Rehoboam was King, and Shechem, where Jeroboam reigned over the Northern tribes. Give a conversation between King Jeroboam and his chief officers, in which they discuss the coming feast at Jerusalem and the King expresses his fears of what will happen if the people go to Jerusalem three times in the year for the feasts. Let one of the King's counselors remind him of the promise given in 1 King 11.38, which told him he need have no such fears for he could trust God. The King tells them his plan, and the others assure him that it is a very wise one. Locate Dan and Bethel on your map. Show Wilde's picture No. 489. Explain that Jeroboam did not tell the people to worship these calves as gods, instead he told them that these images would help to remind them of God just as well as going up to the Temple at Jerusalem helped to keep God in their thoughts. Make sure that your pupils see how disloyal to God Jeroboam was, how he dishonored God. Call for the Second Commandment (Golden Text). The people of Israel soon forgot that these images were only to remind them of God; and they forgot all about God and worshipped those calves as if they were gods, just as people in heathen lands today worship idols. Show an idol and tell how the coming of Jesus drives them out, p. 332. Call for the title of the lesson, and tell your pupils that ever after this, whenever Jeroboam is spoken of in the history, he is called the king "who made Israel to sin". Teach this thought: "Sin is like a weed which outgrows the field where it first found root, and ruins other fields not on the same property."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At the edge of a forest in Germany there stood for many years a pole on which boards were fastened that pointed in opposite directions. On each outstretched arm was painted the name of the city in that direction and its distance from the spot. Through storm after storm it stood there, true to its duty. But finally the winds made it yield a little, it became loosened from its grasp of the earth, and swayed. Then a terrific wind turned

it completely around. It still had the royal colors on its arms which were stretched out as before, but they sent many a weary pilgrim in the wrong direction and caused endless vexation and trouble. Such a perverted guide was the ruler of the northern tribes of Israel.

For Older Pupils. I have read of a maid brought up by an aunt who was untidy, untruthful, lazy and dishonest. People who reluctantly employed the girl were agreeably surprised to find her in no way like the older woman. "How does it happen that you are so different from your aunt, after living with her so many years?" they asked her. "Well, you see," she answered thoughtfully, "I suppose it was on account of her good example". "Her example"—and her questioner stopped in sheer astonishment. "Yes", the girl continued. "You see it was this way. As I grew up, and saw her doing something I thought wasn't right I'd say to myself: 'Well, now, there's a good example for you. Don't you never do such a thing as that.'" Such was the kind of good example which the first King of Northern Israel set for succeeding generations, but they failed to see it aright.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Wrongful Policy

Oriental Expediency. Jeroboam was apprehensive that a good game of bluff was being played, so that by a temporary show of opposition King Rehoboam might be compelled to accept their terms, and lighten the burden of taxation and feudal service. He would then be sacrificed as the price of peace and reunion. Hence his appointment of independent shrines, a separate priesthood, and a new festival day so as to develop an antagonism that would make reconciliation impossible. It was quite in accordance with oriental custom that a merely commercial and industrial difficulty should take on an appearance of religious principle. In the East when a bank becomes insolvent the syndic appointed to examine its account-books is made up of men who will represent the chief religious denominations of the creditors. It is the best guarantee of justice where business honor is only a name.

The device of temporary revolt, such as Jeroboam feared was the motive of the ten tribes, is from time to time adopted by the Christian villages of Lebanon when they have taken offense at some measures of their bishop or local clergy. They send a deputation of their leading men to the Protestant mission to declare that they can no longer drink from the polluted stream of church tradition and have decided to go to Christ, the fountain-head of life. They use the terms of evangelical theology about sin and salvation, promise the free use of a schoolroom, and ask for a preacher. They attend the services thus provided, and even secure a cemetery for the future burying of their dead. Then when their demands are conceded they return in a body to the old allegiance, and priestly absolution makes their trespass and its dishonesty a thing of the past. On most occasions, however, it is found that fire has been played with, and some have received light that leaves a memory of warmth and a sense of forfeiture. True beginnings of life can sometimes be traced back to such time of spurious and prudential profession. *Dr. George M. Mackie,* in *Sunday School Times.*

Paying too High a Price for Power. Jeroboam's plan was shrewd, as a means of accomplishing his purpose it was successful, his people were turned from Jerusalem and the temple, from Rehoboam and the Judeans, and his own power was established. But he gained his power at the cost of disenthroning God and degrading his people.

When Henry Clay was about to introduce into Congress a certain measure, one of his friends whom he consulted, said: "If you do that, it will kill your chances for the presidency." "But is the measure right?" returned Clay. "Yes, it is right." "Then I would rather be right than president." Jeroboam preferred to be wrong and be king.

Good Advice.

"Perish policy and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light.
Whether losing, whether winning,
Trust in God and do the right."

II Causing Others to Sin

How Jeroboam Sinned and Made Israel to Sin. Jeroboam's sin is described (1 K. 14.9) as utter contempt for God:—(1) he ignored the Theocratic character of the monarchy and his consequent obligation as king to submit his will to God's will, as declared in the Law or to be communicated through his prophets. (2) He set up a corrupted form of worship, at sanctuaries now superseded by the Temple at Jerusalem, in rivalry to the pure worship established, amid signal tokens of God's approval, in one appointed sanctuary. (3) He committed a three-fold breach of the Mosaic Law (a) by making an emblem of Jehovah, (b) by establishing an unauthorized priesthood, (c) by devising a festival of his own heart. (4) He persisted in these evil ways, turning a deaf ear to God's warnings by his prophets (1 K. 13.33, 34). *Jeroboam made Israel to sin* by tempting his subjects to indulge their idolatrous proclivities and their superstitious regard for the *high places*. His was a most insidious fashion of idolatry, for it did not disown Jehovah, only acted against his Law in making a representation for the purposes of worship.

Astute, bold, active, unscrupulous as Jeroboam was, the very type of a revolutionary leader, he was unable to foresee the results of his method of carrying out a movement, which was, in fact, of God, and which, otherwise conducted, might have enjoyed God's everlasting favor. The *immediate* result of his godless policy was to strengthen Rehoboam by throwing all the weight of religious support (of the truly godly) on to his side (2 Ch. 11.16); to weaken himself by incurring the dishonor of rebuke from God's prophet at the very outset of his reign. The *ultimate* result was politically, to make his throne, its Divine sanction being forfeited, the sport of military adventurers; religiously, to develop the association of idolatry with Jehovah's worship, which had caused the dismemberment of Solomon's empire. Jeroboam's form of Jehovah-worship, continuing for three centuries, outlived the Kingdom, which lasted only two and a half. Josiah wiped out forever a worship designed to rival that which God had established at Jerusalem; the Captivity wiped out (compare the language concerning Jerusalem, "as one wipeth a dish, turning it upside down") Jeroboam's Kingdom and people. *Andrew Wood*, in *The Hebrew Monarchy*.

"The Evil that Men do Lives after them." Had Jeroboam been "a man after God's own heart", what a glorious start he, their first king, might have given the Northern Kingdom. He was chosen by the people to rule over them and right the wrongs they had suffered under Solomon. His was a great opportunity. Solomon had set the pace toward the worship of false gods: in his old age he built places for worship for his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods, and his wives turned away his heart after other gods. Jeroboam might not only have lessened the burdens imposed by Solomon, but also have righted this, the King's other great wrong. He had a splendid opportunity and he failed ignobly. He might have been spoken of in the annals of his kingdom as Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to walk in the ways of the Lord: instead, whenever his name is mentioned the comment is added, "who made Israel to sin."

Jeroboam was not thinking of the influence of his sin, he could not look down the years and see how soon the altars of Jehovah would become altars of Baal worship, he could not see the downward course of the ten tribes till they were blotted out of existence as a nation because "Jeroboam drove Israel from following Jehovah, and made them sin a great sin, and the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them, until Jehovah removed Israel from out of their own land to Assyria unto this day," 2 K. 17.21-23. But Jeroboam was responsible for his influence, nevertheless.

Dr. J. R. Miller says: "There is a story of an abbott who coveted a piece of ground. The owner consented to lease it to the abbott for one crop only. The abbott sowed acorns, a crop which took three hundred years to ripen. Jeroboam's one sowing mortgaged the new kingdom for evil through all its history. Satan begs for one crop only, and then sows seeds whose harvest will fill all the life to the end. We do not know what we are doing when we start a wrong thing."

Each One is Bound to Leave the Track in Good Condition for Others behind him. "There had been a freight train ahead of us with a broken carwheel," a long-belated traveler explained, as reported in the *Youth's Companion.* "It was a heavily loaded car, and whenever that break in the wheel came over on the rail it came with a thump. If it hit on a tie, the chances were that it was all right; but if it hit between the ties, it was likely to break the rail. And as a matter of fact, it did break twenty rails. Yet it pulled its own load through and delivered its freight unharmed to the next station, which happened to be as far as it was going. There they discovered the damage, and sent the section-gang to flag us and replace the rails.

The car that did the damage did not go into the ditch, as it deserved to do, and logically ought to have done; but it left the occasion for twenty wrecked trains and many lost lives behind it.

There are lives like that, old fellow, lives that run merrily on and land at the terminal, apparently all right. But the lesson of the thing to me was that every man is bound, in fairness, not only to deliver his own cargo, but to leave the track in good condition for others behind him."

III Thou Shalt not Make unto thee a Graven Image

Jeroboam's Idolatry. There are several sins of which Jeroboam was guilty—selfishness, hypocrisy, yielding principles to policy, unfaithfulness to duty, lack of religious perception—but he was not consciously an idolator. He would have repelled the thought of worshipping Baal with horror. He did not intend to present a false god for his people to worship—he did not break the first commandmant: like Aaron he intended to represent the true God by symbols—he broke the second commandment. He gave the people a conception of God that made it easy for them to degrade him to a level with the god of the Semitic people akin to them, and their downward course from true worship to the worst forms of idolatry naturally followed.

Images in Catholic Churches. This is the Decree of the Council of Trent: The Holy Synod declares, That the images of Christ, of the virgin mother of God, and of other saints, are to be had and retained especially in churches, and that *due honor* and *veneration* are to be shown them: not that it is believed that any divinity, or virtue, is inherent in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped, or that anything is to be asked of them, or that trust is to be placed in images as of old was done by the Gentiles, who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which they represent; so that through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, and fall down, we may *adore* Christ and *venerate* the saints whose likeness the images bear.

The italics are Father Francis H. Tavisk's, to whom I am indebted for this translation, and his further comment that "The Catholic religion teaches that we *worship God* alone; we *venerate the saints and their images.*" This distinction is without doubt made by Catholic priests and educated Catholics, but any one who has ever visited a Catholic church in Mexico must be certain that to those ignorant peons the images are their idols.

The Coming of Jesus Drives out the Idols. She was an old Chinese woman, and stood balancing herself on her tiny bound feet with the aid of a cane, listening to the missionary telling the story of Jesus to a group of women.

"That is most wonderful," she said to herself. "The foreigner must be mistaken. I will ask the Chinese woman who is with her if the story is true."

"Yes, it is true," the Chinese woman replied, in answer to her question. "I will tell you more, if you will let me come and see you."

Next day the Bible woman went to call on her new acquaintance and spent an hour explaining about Jesus and the way to get rid of sin, until the old lady believed and found great joy and peace.

A few nights later she had a strange dream. A great light fell across the floor of her room, and the idols on the shelf began to move. Then a figure whom she took to be Jesus stood in the doorway and the idols climbed down off the shelf.

"Where are you going?" she asked them.

"When Jesus comes in, we must go," the idols replied, and the old lady awoke.

It was only a dream, but it was nevertheless a true picture of a great truth. The coming of Jesus drives out the idols in every land where the gospel is preached. *World Wide.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The far-reaching effects of Jeroboam's sin are appalling. Ponder well Schiller's words: "The very curse of an evil deed is that it must always continue to engender evil. "Look to your radiations," a modern philosopher counsels; "ask yourself honestly how you are affecting the people with whom you habitually come in contact."

Our Prayer: Father of mercies, save us from all selfishness, from seeking power at the cost of right, from everything that is underhanded and mean. Keep us from irreverence and idolatry in every form. May we never lose sight of thee in the symbols meant to remind us of thee. Keep us from putting anything before thee in our hearts. And keep us, O Father of mercies, from everything that will cause others to sin, and let the influence of our lives ever make for thy glory and righteousness.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Modern substitutes for Christianity; Ethical Religion; Pantheism; Humanity; Theism without Christ, etc. "The golden calves signified unrest, dissatisfaction, desire for change. Let us go no more to church; let us seek God along some other path. They stood for a condition of things with which we are perfectly familiar. They represented a distinctly modern temper. It is a characteristic of our own day, also, that multitudes of people are turning away from Jerusalem and trying to find God somewhere else, at Dan or at Bethel."

2. Causing others to sin. See the Second Topic.

3. Political expediency. Does the desire for the second term handicap our presidents and tempt them to policies which they would not otherwise pursue? See first topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What can you tell about Rehoboam's reign in Judah? 2. Who succeeded him and what happened in his reign? 3. Were Rehoboam and Jeroboam friendly? 4. Were Abijah and Jeroboam friendly? 5. Who was king of Israel when Asa ascended the throne of Judah? (1 K. 15.9.) 6. How long did Asa reign? (1 K. 15.10.) 7. What happened in the early years of Asa's reign? 8. Who was Zerah and what was the result of Asa's war with him? (2 Ch. 14.9-15.) 10. What did David say to Solomon in 1 Ch. 28.9 about serving and seeking God? 11. What light is thrown upon the duties of a "teaching priest" by Lev. 10.11 and 2 Ch. 17.7-9? 12. What earlier leader repeatedly counseled his people to be strong? (Joshua 1.6-9.) 13. What had been Asa's prayer before he went to meet Zerah? (2 Ch. 14.11.) 14. What does Heb. 6.10 say about God's reward of work? 15. Draw a sketch map of Canaan and locate Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon. 16. Compare the two accounts of Asa's reforms (1 K. 15.9-24; 2 Ch. 15.1 .) 17. What happened in Asa's reign after the covenant made by the people?

Questions to Think About. 1. What is meant by "the spirit of Jehovah came upon Azariah"? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 334.) What history have we studied this year which could be described by the verses 3-6? 3. What do you think about the order given in verse 13? 4. How may its severity be explained? (*Guide,* ¶ 9, p. 335.) 5. What does the word "covenant" mean? 6. What does it mean to "seek God with the whole desire"? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, 339.) 7. What did Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount about asking and receiving, seeking and finding? 8. What may we call Rehoboam's "epitaph"? (2 Ch. 12.14.) 9. What may we call Asa's? (2 Ch. 15.17.) 10. What is there in your life that needs reforming? 11. Who will help you?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Repeat all the Ten Commandments. Begin a note book upon the Lives of Kings of Israel, and write How Jeroboam Led Israel to Sin.

ASA'S GOOD REIGN

Golden Text

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. James 4.8

LESSON II Chronicles 15.1-15 MEMORIZE verses 1,2

And the spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2 and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: 4 but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. 7 But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded.

8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominations out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill-country of Ephraim; and he renewed the altar of Jehovah, that was before the porch of Jehovah. 9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him. 10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11 And they sacrificed unto Jehovah in that day, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. 12 And they entered into the covenant to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; 13 and that whosoever would not seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14 And they sware unto Jehovah with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. 15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and Jehovah gave them rest round about.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The Spirit of God.* Although the word *Spirit* is capitalized, as though meaning the Holy Spirit, the Personality of the Holy Spirit was first clearly revealed by Christ. In Old Testament times the word *spirit* refers to God's Power. Recall Judges 13.25 (Lesson V, First Quarter); 1 S. 11.6 (Lesson XI, First Quarter).—*Azariah.* The son of Oded. His name means, "Jehovah helps"; nothing further is known about this prophet.

2. *He went out to meet Asa.* Asa was returning victorious from his engagement with Zerah; 2 Ch. 14.15. See ¶ 5, p. 336.—*Hear ye me.* "He told them plainly upon what terms they stood with God. Let them not think that, having obtained this victory, all was their own forever; no, he must let them know they were upon their good behavior. Let them do well, and it will be well with them, otherwise not" (*Matthew Henry*).—*If ye seek him . . . you.* Compare David's counsel to Solomon, 1 Ch. 28.9, and Christ's words, Mt. 7.7, 8.

3-6. Perhaps these words should be bracketed as the observation of the Chronicler and an interruption of Azariah's words which are resumed in v. 7, but they may well have been part of the prophet's speech, for it was common for prophets to recall the nation's past history. This history, moreover, enforces Azariah's main exhortation, that Jehovah will be with you while you are with him. The situation here recalled is that of the time of the judges, as our early lessons of the year have shown. Recall how the Israelites turned away from

God and were oppressed by one enemy after the other—Moabites, Midianites, Ammonites, Philistines—and each time when they turned to God he raised up a deliverer for them. At this time after the division of the kingdom the term *Israel* referred, strictly speaking, to the Northern Kingdom, but it would be used also in referring to their past history as a nation.—*A teaching priest.* See Lev. 10.11; 2 Ch. 17.7-9.—*There was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in.* Travelling was unsafe, Judges 5.6.

"The highways of Israel, that echoed the tramp of the traveler's tread,
Deserted and silent ran on, as though through the realms of the dead;
The straggler that journeyed alone, in his fear of the foeman's wrath,
In the dark shade of evening stole through the wild hills' wildest path;
The villagers ceased to assemble, they cowered from the sight of their foes."

7. *Be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack.* Compare Joshua's farewell counsel, Joshua 1.6-9. The prophet now applies his words to Asa. Such has been the history of Israel in the past; now as for you, O King, be strong, firm, faithful to Jehovah. Asa had won a great victory, and his courage for that combat had come from his trust in God—There is none beside thee to help; we rely on thee, in thy name we are come, he had prayed, 2 Ch. 14.11—and that victory should only quicken him to further efforts. The reward of one duty done is another duty to do.—*Your work.* The contemplated renewal of the covenant and the consequent religious reformation.—*Shall be rewarded.* "How should it go unrewarded, when the work is its own reward?" (*Matthew Henry*). God is not unrighteous to forget your work, Heb. 6.10.

8. *And the prophecy.* Or, *even the prophecy,* RVm.—*Oded.* Probably the words "Azariah the son of" have dropped out of the text in copying, or Oded is a mistake for Azariah.—*Abominations.* The idolatry and degrading heathen rites.—*The cities which he had taken.* His father Abijah had taken: 2 Ch. 13.19.—*He renewed the altar of Jehovah.* The altar of burnt offerings, erected before the temple sixty years earlier.

9. *He gathered.* He summoned to a solemn assembly.—*All Judah and Benjamin.* His tribes.—*Them that sojourned with them.* See 2 Ch. 11.16.—*Out of Simeon.* The territory of Simeon lay south of Judah, cut off from the other tribes on the north, and had practically belonged to the Southern Kingdom from the time of the division.—*They fell to him.* They joined his kingdom. —*Out of Israel.* So many left the Southern Kingdom that King Baasha thought it worth while to fortify Ramah, "that he might not suffer any one to go out or come in to Asa, King of Judah."—*When they saw that Jehovah his God was with him.* This was the reason for their coming. Compare Zech. 8.23. "It is good to be with those that have God with them, to come into relation with, and contract acquaintance and friendship with, those that live in the fear and favor of God" (*Matthew Henry*).

10. *In the third month.* The month *Sivan,* corresponding to our month of June, the time when the Feast of Weeks (harvest) was held, Dt. 16.9-10.

11. *They sacrificed.* Offered as a thank offering.—*Of the spoil which they had brought.* From their victory over Zerah, 2 Ch. 14.9-15.

12. *They entered into the covenant.* They renewed the covenant which their forefathers had made. See Ex. 24.3-8.

13. *Whosoever would not seek Jehovah should be put to death.* This was the law: Ex. 22.20; Dt. 13.6-11; 17.2-7. God's revelation of himself and his laws has been gradual. Old Testament mercy is not New Testament mercy. Christ had not revealed the love and long-suffering and mercy of God the Father, and Asa acted in accordance with the light that had been revealed to him.

15. *Sought him with their whole desire.* See ¶ 3, p. 339.—*He was found of them.* As was the promise, verse 2.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *Trumpets and cornets.* In length, the trumpet was little less than a cubit. It was composed of a narrow tube, somewhat thicker than a flute, but with as much breadth as was sufficient for admission of the breath of a man's mouth; it ended in the form of a bell, like common trumpets. *Josephus.*

Authorities differ as to the shape of the cornet, some supposing it to have been straight, while others contend that it was more or less bent like a horn. From its name which means "bright" or "clear" the *shophar* is thought to have had a clear, shrill sound. *James M. Freeman,* in *Bible Customs.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Why was the Kingdom divided? How was it divided? Who was the first king of Judah? Who was the first king of Israel? What sort of king was Rehoboam? What sort of king was Jeroboam? What was the condition of the country in the time of the Judges? What happened when the people forsook Jehovah? Who were the enemies? Who were the leading Judges?

Rehoboam's and Abijah's Reign in Judah. During a seventeen years' reign as King of Judah, Rehoboam had lost two-thirds of his kingdom, had lost the glories of the Temple to Shishak, and had set up idolatrous shrines where rites were practiced to which Jeroboam's calf-worship in Israel was infinitely superior. On his death he was succeeded by his son Abijah. His brief reign of three years (according to the Hebrew reckoning, one whole year and parts of two others) was mainly occupied in warfare with Jeroboam, whom he defeated with half as large a force. He "walked in all the sins of his father", and was succeeded on his death by his son Asa.

Asa's Early Reign in Judah. Asa came to the throne in the last year of Jeroboam, King of Israel. During his long reign of forty-one years there were seven other Kings on the throne of Israel: Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Tibni, and Ahab.

The first ten years of Asa's reign were years of peace. He instituted an immediate reform, destroying heathen images and places of worship. He strengthened the defenses of his Kingdom and raised a large army. Thus he was ready for Zerah, the Ethiopian, when he came with an immense force. After fervent prayer for Divine aid, Asa met Zerah at the Philistine border, routed him, pursuing him even into Gerar. As he returned with a great amount of spoil, he was met by the prophet Azariah. Instead of greeting him with words of congratulation and praise, the prophet warned him that he must remain loyal to God and urged him to complete his reforms. How much a reformation was needed we realize when we are told that Maacah, the queen mother, had erected a dreadful image of Astarte in Jerusalem. This, Asa had ground to dust and buried in the Valley of the Kidron, and he deposed the queen. The great convocation that Asa assembled and the covenant there ratified in the fifteenth year of his reign is our lesson theme.

Destruction of Idols. Relief from Khorsabad

How Asa Mortgaged his Kingdom. Baasha, who came to the throne of Israel in 913 B.C., was an ambitious sovereign. He entered into an alliance

with Ben-hadad of Damascus. He fortified Ramah, about six miles north of Jerusalem, and thus commanded the passageway leading to Jerusalem, Asa's capital. Asa felt unequal to the task of dislodging his enemy unaided: he stripped the Temple and his palace of their treasures and sent them to Damascus to purchase the aid of Ben-hadad. Ben-hadad sent his armies to attack the cities of Israel, and Baasha was forced to leave Ramah. Asa then destroyed the fortifications of Ramah and used the stone and timber to fortify Geba and Mizpah.

While Asa thus accomplished his immediate desire, he mortgaged his Kingdom, as it were, to Syria, for Ben-hadad seems to have regarded Judah as a subject kingdom. In Ben-hadad's son's reign, Judah and Israel united against the Syrians as their common foe. This was the beginning of that long series of wars which weakened both kingdoms and made them an easier prey for the later Assyrian conquests. The prophet Hanani told Asa he had acted foolishly in relying on the King of Syria rather than upon God, and his words so angered the king that he imprisoned the prophet. Asa died in 876 B.C.; Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The battle where Asa defeated Zerah and his Ethiopians was by Mareshah in the Shephelah, the Low Hills that separate the tableland of Judah from the low-lying coastland. He pursued them as far as Gerar, a town a few miles south of Gaza near the coast. Somewhere on his return journey he was met by Azariah. The assembly of the people was at Jerusalem.

This map gives the location of the tribes mentioned in the lesson. Draw it on your board and let your pupils copy it in their Note Book under the heading "Asa's Reign". See the Note Book work assigned.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Teach the lesson in four scenes. First, the valley scene where the people of Judah are drawn up in battle array, awaiting orders to go forward to meet their approaching foe, the Ethiopians, while Asa, their King, is offering his beautiful prayer of trust in God. Second, the army returning, jubilant, from the victory, bearing their spoils: the prophet Azariah approaching: the dialogue between the King and the prophet: call for the Golden Text and explain it. Third, the great meeting at Jerusalem, where all the people joyfully pledge themselves to worship and serve God. Fourth, Asa destroying the idols, repairing the Temple, doing all that had been commanded him. Call the King Asa the Faithful. Tell them of the One who is called in the Bible "Faithful and True." The people of Judah had Asa the Faithful to lead them in doing what was right. We have a far wiser and better Leader, Christ the Faithful and True, to tell us what is right. Shall we not follow our Great Guide? Shall we not pledge ourselves to love and serve him?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Nearly twenty years ago a missionary in China was met on his morning walk by a young Chinese student who stopped him to say how useless it was for him to stay and work among the Chinese, for he was despised by them all. "If you stay here a hundred years you will not have won as many friends as you have fingers," he said con-

temptuously. Five years ago that Chinese student came to the missionary and asked to be taught all about Jesus. "All the city says that you are guilty of doing good", was the reason he gave for coming.

Two weeks ago we heard about a king who was guilty of doing evil: who was he? Of what was he guilty? What was the result? Over what Kingdom did he rule? Last week we heard of another king who was guilty of doing evil. Who? What was the evil? Over what Kingdom did he rule? Today we are to study about a King who was guilty of doing good.

For Older Pupils. Begin with a talk about the different viewpoints of the writers of Kings and of Chronicles. Question your pupils about these books, their purpose, their characteristics (see pp. 35-36). Compare the accounts of Asa's reforms, I K. 15.9-24 and 2 Ch. 15 and 16, and bring out their different viewpoints. Chronicles tells how the prophet's influence led the King to make his reforms; Kings omits this. Kings mentions Asa's destruction of idols and his war with Israel, but Chronicles points out that the long peace was the reward of Asa's seeking Jehovah and then his continuous wars were the penalty of his later unfaithfulness to Jehovah. This thought of the connection between obedience to God and national prosperity, and disobedience and national disaster, runs through the Books of Chronicles.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to You.

A Nation's Duty. It is the duty of nations as well as men to own their dependence on the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the holy Scriptures and proven by all history that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. *Abraham Lincoln.*

The Individual's Privilege. Have we drawn nigh to God and has he drawn nigh to us? "Is God's face turned towards us? Do we want it turned towards us?" questioned Dr. Robert E. Speer in an address, and then he illustrated what he meant by this incident.

I was awakened the other morning about four o'clock in my room, by a little voice just beside my bed in the dark, asking for a drink. I got the little lad a drink, and he lay quiet a moment, and then he said, "Father, may I sing myself to sleep?" "Yes, little boy, go ahead."

But soon he got up so much enthusiasm that I told him he would better stop, or none of the rest of us could sleep. Then he was quiet a while, but soon I heard a little voice again in the perfect stillness of the night. "Father, have you got your face turned toward me?" "Yes, little boy", and the darkness was as the light of the day to him.

Man's Extremity is God's Opportunity. The Reverend Abraham Mitrie Rihbany came to our country from Syria, expecting to make his fortune here in a few weeks. He could not speak our language, and he had only the few necessary dollars, borrowed money, with which to land. Recently he has written an article for the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled "In New York with Nine Cents," where I find this account of how he drew night to God and God drew nigh to him.

During my days of enforced and painful idleness in New York, Castle Garden was my chief resort. I would spend hours on those benches, either writing poetry, generally of a dolorous kind, or studying the many varied ships which plied the deep before me, or picturing to myself the greater distress which I thought awaited me. But Castle Garden stands in my memory associated with much holier thoughts than these, for it was there that a spiritual vision came to me unique in my experience. It is, I believe, chiefly because of that vision that throughout my ministry I have preached with unshaken faith and unreserved devotion the precept that "man's extremity is God's opportunity."

Feeling deeply depressed and disheartened, late one afternoon, I strolled down to the famous park. The sea and sky were very beautiful but I seemed to have no share in their beauty; I appeared to myself to be a fugitive in an unfriendly world. I sat on a bench and cast a vacant look on the world before me. I felt very lonely, and longed, as a babe, for my mother.

But as the sun began to fade away from the sky, I began as by a miracle, to feel an inward supply of power and courage. The beauty of the sea and sky seemed to have been made for me; I was owner of all that I saw. I seemed to myself for the moment to look upon the world through the mystic eyes of my oriental ancestors, and see it, as far as a youth could, as the garment of God. Surely the Father was with me. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God." I remember with perfect clearness that I said audibly, "The God who created me and these wonders before me will never forsake me," and arose and walked like a strong man.

Now you have the privilege of explaining this experience as "an uprush of reserve energy from the subconscious realm," or as "nervous reaction," or whatever else you please. What *I* know is that the abiding worth of an experience ranks higher in the world of real life than that of any philosophy *about* it. From that day to this, notwithstanding the fact that I have often stumbled and fallen, doubt in God's providence has never secured a hold upon my mind, nor do I remember that I have ever failed to trust that he is mine and I am his. In my extremity in a lonely world, without Bible, preacher, priest or sacrament, I came into living, first-hand contact with the Eternal Reality.

II Whole-hearted Service

What Seeking God with the Whole Desire Means. This does not mean that there are to be no other desires, for it is a great mistake to put religion against other things which are meant to be its instruments and its helps. We are not required to seek nothing else in order to seek God wholly. He demands no impossible and fantastic detachment of ourselves from the ordinary and legitimate occupations, affections, and duties of human life, but he does ask that the dominant desire after him should be powerful enough to express itself through all our actions, and that we should seek for God in them, and for them in God. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *Expositus of Scripture.*

Be Perfect. In every sphere but that of character men are not satisfied with anything short of perfection. It is characteristic of a brilliant civilization. In the realm of art the real student does not say this or that picture "will do", "it is right in the main"; but he pursues it to an ideal beauty, and he is not content till he has given his picture "the last touch." Art is impatient of irregularities, slovenliness, shortcomings.

In the realm of science, too, no detail is considered trifling. A well-instructed man may consider some aspect of a plant, or an animal, to be immaterial, but to the scientist it is an essential characteristic. In the realm of commerce, also, there is a passion for pushing things to the highest level of perfection and efficiency. In the world generally, we want what is perfect, entire, lacking nothing.

Said a great man of the past: "Give everything a last touch," and that is what St. James says: do not be content with possessing great qualities in the rough, give them the last touch, take care that your spiritual life is entire, perfect, lacking nothing, brought to the last possibility of delicateness and beauty.

It is here ofttimes that we fail. We are not half as passionate in perfecting our character as we are in attaining perfection in art, in science, in music, or in the terrestrial life generally. And what a wonderful way we have of being content with our imperfect selves! We attain to a respectable average character, and we are content with it. We permit in our inner life imperfections that are most perilous—defects of humility, defects of faith, defects of purity, defects of sincerity. We are dimly conscious of these obscure failings, but we do not seek to be emancipated from them; and how many of the failings of our public life may be attributed to the fact that we have never dealt faithfully with the subtle feelings of the conscience and the affections.

It is necessary that the barrel of a rifle shall be perfectly clean, if we want to shoot straight. But every time the rifle is fired minute particles from the bullet adhere to the bore; and they are so minute that they are practically imperceptible to the eye, and no ordinary method of cleansing a gun can remove

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them. These minute particles are fatal to good shooting. They can deflect a bullet four inches in a two hundred yards range, and as the Bisley bull's-eye is only four inches in circumference, it is easy to see how many a man has missed the mark and lost in the competition for valuable prizes.

How much this resembles us in life! Secret faults, imperfections in purity, honesty, and truthfulness have made us miss the mark. A man says: "I am tolerably right; I would pass muster with the crowd, my life comes within the criterion of society; and I am accredited in the Church." But St. James says, "Be perfect, entire. lacking nothing." Let us, therefore, ask God for the grace that cleanses the heart, gives delicacy to the conscience, and gives transparency to the purpose. The *Rev. Frank Johnson,* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

III Lands without the True God

A Sentence from the History of Every Christian Nation. Now, for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

These words might well be written in the history of every Christian nation today, its own name being substituted for that of Israel. While naturally all men are religious, there has been a time in every nation's history when its people have been only groping after God if haply they might feel after him and find him. for though he is not far from each one of us, for in him we live, they have reared their altars to Unknown Gods and have been content to worship the supreme King under images of wood and stone.

For a long time our own ancestors were without the true God. Said a high-caste Brahmin at a meeting in Philadelphia: "My friends, if I had ever had any doubt as to the value of Christian missions that doubt would be removed as I stand here and look into your bright and intelligent faces, and consider the facts in the case. When my ancestors were among the lordliest persons on earth, your ancestors were among the most degraded of human beings. despised by those of my race. Yet by Christian missionaries your fathers were sought out and won to Christ, and in consequence you now sit here, clothed in your right mind. as a living proof of the value of Christian missions."

The Relative Proportion of People with and without the True God. There are five hundred million nominal Christians in the world, men and women and children who have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. a tremendous army, but—there are twice as many who have not heard the good news. If the apostles who started out in the first century to tell about Christ and him crucified could have looked ahead and seen that nineteen centuries later two-thirds of the people of the world would still be living in darkness, don't you think they would have lost heart? What a blessing it will be when the churches can stop talking about Christian missions because all the world has been "missioned," to use a word which a small girl coined.

The Sunday-school's Work. If we can make our Sunday-schools the blazing centers of the light of Jesus Christ, then indeed will the darkness of the world be dissipated. The happiness of seeing a great company of people gathered together in the interests of the Sunday-school is the happiness of knowing that these are they who seek light, and who know that the lamp from which their spirits can be kindled is the lamp that glows in the Word of God. *President Wilson.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Asa did not ask himself the question, "Will it be difficult to abolish idolatry?" but he set at once about the work of reform.

> "Be strong!
> Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
> And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame;
> Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name."

It was when Asa was flushed with victory that Azariah reminded him that he must be strong to combat idolatry within his Kingdom, that it was not a time

to be slack. We must not "let up" in our warfare against evil. we must not rest upon laurels gained, but must push forward to greater moral victories.

Our Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come whole-heartedly seeking thee. We draw nigh to thee, confident that thou art nigh to us, and we gain fresh strength, and gird ourselves with new resolutions, because of this assurance of thy presence with us. Like Asa of old, we have the double task of overthrowing evil and enthroning good. Here we make our covenant with thee, pledging thee glad obedience and loyal service. Keep us, dear Father, from ever becoming slack in our work for thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Books of Chronicles. See pages 35, 36.
2. Slackness in reforms of today.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How did Omri gain his throne? (1 K. 16.8-22.) 2. What good things are told us about Omri in 1 K. 16.16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27? 3. What evil things are told about him in 1 K. 16.22, 26? 4. Whose example did Omri and Ahab follow? 5. What does "the Tishbite, of the sojourners of Gilead" mean? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 342.) 6. Read 1 K. 16.29-33 and tell its bearing upon Elijah's announcement to Ahab. 7. How is Elijah described in 2 K. 1.8? 8. Why is he commonly spoken of as wearing a hairy mantle? (Compare Zech. 13.4 and the description of John the Baptist, "the Elijah that was to come", Mt. 3.4.) 9. How do we know that Elijah was an athlete? (1 K. 18.46.) 10. What did Ahab call Elijah in 1 K. 16.8-22? 11. Who did Jesus say was Elijah? (Mt. 11.14.) 12. What is said about Elijah in Malachi? (Mal. 4.5.) 13. For what was the drought a punishment? (I K. 16.31-33.) 14. What does James say was the secret of Elijah's power over the rain? (Jas. 5.17, 18.) 15. Where was the brook Cherith? (*Guide,* p. 346.) 16. What did Elijah do for the widow of Zarephath, as recorded in the verses that follow our lesson? 17. What reference did Jesus make to the widow of Zarephath? (Lk. 4.24-26.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why is there no record of Elijah's life in the books of Chronicles? (They are concerned chiefly with the Kingdom of Judah.) 2. Why did Elijah appear before Ahab? 3. Why did Elijah say the drought would cease only at his word? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 343.) 4. Why did Elijah flee from Ahab? 5. How could Elijah so fearlessly threaten King Ahab with drought? 6. Why did Elijah say "As Jehovah liveth"? 7. What did he mean by saying "before whom I stand"? 8. What is the meaning of "the word of Jehovah came unto him"? (*Guide,* p. 343.) 9. What is meant by "I have commanded the ravens"? 10. How could Elijah hide by the brook Cherith? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 346.) 11. What is meant by "I have commanded a widow to sustain thee"? (*Guide,* ¶ 7, p. 343.) 12. What miracle did Jesus work which is recalled by the widow's unfailing jar and cruse? 13. What part of this story about Elijah interested Jesus? (Lk. 4.24-26.) 14. When John the Baptist suddenly appeared what was the first question asked him? Why? 15. Describe Elijah's character as shown in this lesson. 16. Do you have Elijah's sense of dependence on God?

Note-Book Work. In your book upon the Lives of Kings of Judah, write about Asa's Reign.

Questions upon the Books of Kings. 1. Why do we have two Books of Kings? 2. Who wrote the Books? 3. Under what circumstances were they written as we now have them? 4. What do they themselves tell us as to sources of information used in writing? 5. What is their purpose? 6. Why are they called Books of the Kings? 7. What is their date? 8. What period of history do they cover? 9. What great personalities appear in the Books? 10. What is the framework of each king's record? 11. What would you say about the way in which these records are written? 12. What striking contrast in literary style do the Books contain? 13. Write an outline of the Books. 14. What are their lessons for today?

LESSON IX—AUGUST 29

GOD'S CARE OF ELIJAH

Golden Text

Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. I Peter 5.7

LESSON I Kings 17.1-16 MEMORIZE verses 14-16

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word. 2 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. 4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of Jehovah; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

8 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. 12 And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not: go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days. 16 The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Elijah.* This is the first mention of the prophet Elijah. The name Elijah means "Jehovah is my God", and typifies the prophet's life mission of bearing witness to Jehovah as the one only true God. Second Kings 1.8 describes him as a "hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins."—*The Tishbite.* See p. 346.—*Sojourners of Gilead.* Members of the tribe of Naphtali who dwelt for a time in Gilead.—*Ahab.* The king of Israel who succeeded Omri. For "the evil which he did was greater than that of all the kings who were before him", and Elijah now suddenly appears and declares that a long drought is to come upon the land as punishment from God for these sins. Read 1 K. 16.29-33.—*As Jehovah, the God of Israel liveth.* The usual form of an oath.—*Before whom I stand.* Whose servant I am: a claim made also by Elisha (2 K. 3.) and Paul (Acts 27.23), and a title given to Moses (Dt. 34.5).—*There shall not be dew nor rain.* Without the rain there could be no harvest. The reason for this is doubtless to be found in 1 K. 16.32, the erection by Ahab of an altar to Baal. Similar was the punishment threatened by Moses for apostasy, Dt. 11.16, 17. The hand of God was especially recognized in the giving or withholding of rain.—*These years.* The drought would be of long duration. In the third year, I K. 18.1; three years and six months, Lk. 4.25 and Jas. 5.17. Three and a half, being half of the mystical

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JEZEBEL

From a Drawing by George T. Tobin

number seven, is explained as having become the traditional duration of a great calamity.—*But according to my word.* According to the word which I shall speak at the command of Jehovah, I K. 18.1, 36. He prayed fervently that it might not rain, and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, Jas. 5.17, 18.

2. *The word of Jehovah came unto him.* This and kindred phrases, such as "Thus saith Jehovah", "Jehovah spake", occur about two thousand times in the Old Testament. The phrases are familiar formulas of all the prophets and express their sincere conviction that they are speaking or acting in accordance with the will of God as revealed to them through mental impulses or "by divers portions and in divers manners".

3. *Get thee hence.* To avoid the wrath of Ahab and Jezebel. In 1 K. 18.10 we learn that Ahab sought him everywhere.—*Hide thyself by the brook Cherith.* Where there were convenient caves: see p. 346.—*Before.* East of. See p. 346.

4. *I have commanded the ravens.* I will use the ravens as my agents. "All circumstances are the voice of God, commanding or restraining" (*Maclaren*). It is often objected that the raven is classed among the unclean birds, Lev. 11.15, but it is only as food that they are there decreed unclean. Many think that instead of ravens we should read Arabs, by changing a single vowel in the Hebrew, and others explain that merchants are meant. That Elijah was miraculously fed by the ravens is no more difficult to believe than that he was miraculously fed by the widow's unfailing jar and cruse: the divine care of the man of God is equally shown, whether or not the events can be accounted for by known laws. Whether the writer of the stories about Elijah intended the statements which read like miracles to be understood literally, or as poetical, pictorial statements of facts, each one must judge for himself.

6. *The ravens brought bread and flesh.* "Those who have watched the habits of large birds can bear witness to the large supply which they bring home under ordinary circumstances" (*Lumby*). Thus Milton sings:—

> He by the brook of Cherith stood,
> And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
> Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn;
> Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought.

9. *Get thee to Zarephath.* Sarepta, in New Testament times. See p. 346. In Luke 4.24-26, Jesus makes no reference to the miraculous element of this account, but is interested in the fact that, persecuted in his own country, Elijah found a refuge with a woman of another land—an instance of one who, like himself, was a prophet without honor in his own country.—*I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee.* "Perhaps we are to suppose that, just as the ravens were commanded and knew not by whom, so this woman received the command, when she saw the travel-stained and gaunt stranger, through her womanly impulses of compassion, not knowing who moved them nor what she did when she sheltered the man whose life was, at that moment, the most important thing in the world" (*Maclaren*). Note that this woman was of the same race as Queen Jezebel, Elijah's bitterest enemy.

12. *As Jehovah thy God liveth.* She would recognize Elijah as an Israelite by his speech and garb.—*The jar . . . the cruse.* Notice the definite articles; every household was provided with these two receptacles.—*Oil.* Olive oil.—*Two sticks.* A few sticks.—*My son.* Jewish tradition declares this son to have been Jonah, the prophet.

13. *Go on and do as thou hast said.* Go on with good courage, and hope for better things (*Josephus*).—*Make me therefore a little cake first.* A severe test of her faith. The "cake" was a small round piece of dough cooked by laying it upon hot ashes or heated stones.

14. *The jar of meal shall not waste.* Compare the miracle of the feeding of the Five Thousand.

15. *She went and did according to the saying of Elijah.* "Charity and mercy have no geographical limits." "Of her heroic faith it might well be said, 'I have not found the like, no, not in Israel'."

17. *Neither did the cruse of oil fail.* Neither did she lose her son, whom the prophet restored to her, I K. 17.17-24: compare Christ's words in Mt. 10.40-42. Elijah stayed with them till the drought was about to end.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Who was of the sojourners of Gilead.* All the characteristics of the man are in keeping with his birth and early training—a Gileadite. For Gilead, then as now, was a land of nomads, wild, rough men, half shepherds, half cattle-lifters. The prophet's dress proclaimed the mountaineer of the Arabian border, exactly the same as is worn today: the undergarment bound with a broad leather belt, and over it a loose, coarse cloak of sheepskin, with the wool outside, its dark-brown folds floating in the wind as he hurriedly strode along with bare head and long black locks covering his neck: for he was a Nazirite. The Moslem prophet-dervish, as different from the dervish of the towns as Elijah from a Levite of Jerusalem, exactly copies this dress and habit. He has no settled home; no man knows his route. I have known one startle an Arab party at feast by his sudden apparition, ejaculating some verses of the Koran, warning his listeners agains the Giaours, and calling on them to fight for "the faith," and then stalk forth from the awe-stricken company to seek shelter and food from the humblest and poorest, who receive his visit as the highest of honors. *Tristam,* in *Eastern Customs.*

1. *There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.* Now Menander mentions this drought in his account of the acts of Ethbaal, King of the Tyrians; where he says thus: "Under him there was a want of rain from the month Hyperberetæus till the month of Hyperberetæus of the year following." By these words he designed the want of rain that was in the days of Ahab; for that time it was that Ethbaal also reigned over the Tyrians, as Menander informs us. *Josephus, Antiquities.*

10. *Gathering sticks.* Fuel is now very scarce in Palestine. One sees women carrying small twigs and thorn branches on their heads which they have "gleaned" with as much care as the Swiss peasants glean their fields.

12. *A handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse.* The chief products of the Hebrews were corn, wine and olive oil, much of which was exported to Tyre and the Egyptian market. Olive oil took the place of our butter in the preparation of food, and was also used for light, for anointing, and in the burial of the dead. Syrians of today prefer the oil to butter, which cannot be kept easily in their hot climate. Sometimes they fry their dough in oil, instead of baking it. They still keep their meal in an earthen jar, to prevent its being destroyed by insects. The cruse probably had a small handle near the bottom and a straight spout with a small opening, like the clay cruse in use now in Palestine.—*I am gathering two sticks.* This is a common mode of speech in the East, two standing for a few.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the King whose "epitaph" was, "he caused Israel to sin"? What prophets have we heard about in our lesson this year? What was the work of each? How have we seen that God cared for David? For Jonathan?

Conditions in the Kingdom of Israel from Jeroboam to Omri. Two Sundays ago we heard how *Jeroboam,* the first king of Israel, "sinned and made Israel to sin." He had a troubled reign of twenty-two years. In 2 Ch. 13.2-20, we hear of his warfare with Abijah, son of Rehoboam, of the Kingdom of Judah, in which he was defeated with great losses. "The Lord smote him and he died," and was followed by his son *Nadab,* who walked in his father's evil ways. Nadab ruled only two years, and was slain in a conspiracy raised by a man of humble origin, of the house of Issachar, *Baasha,* his own commander-in-chief. Baasha "waded to the throne through blood," for his first act was to establish his rule by putting to death all the descendants of Jeroboam. The chief event of Baasha's reign was his attempt to gain control of the Southern Kingdom in the reign of Asa (noted in our last lesson), which was frustrated by the interference of the Syrian king, Ben-hadad. The prophet Jehu denounced Baasha and told him that because he walked in the way of Jeroboam, all his house should be destroyed. Twenty-four years Baasha reigned and died in peace, and was buried in state. His son *Elah* reigned only two brief years, and then the captain of half his chariot force,

Zimri, conspired against him and murdered him as he sat in Tirzah, now the capital, "drinking himself drunk." Zimri immediately slew the remainder of the royal house of Baasha, but he met in return a terrible death after only a week's reign. The army at this time was besieging the Philistine town of Gibbethon, and when the news came of Elah's murder, they made *Omri,* their general, king, and marched to Tirzah and besieged it. When Zimri saw the city taken, he set fire to the castle of the palace and perished in the flames. Omri thus gained the throne from Zimri, but he had a second rival to conquer, for half of the people preferred *Tibni.* The contest between them lasted perhaps four years, and ended with the victory of Omri, "so Tibni died and Omri reigned."

We have reviewed fifty years in this history from Jeroboam to Omri, and in this brief time have seen three dynasties and five kings on the throne of Israel; Jeroboam and his son Nadab; Baasha and his son Elah; and Zimri.

With Omri begins the fourth dynasty. The writer of Kings gives but a passing notice of Omri, mentioning the length of his reign, his choice of Samaria for a capital, and his idolatry, though he does allude to "his might that he showed." Yet Omri was one of Israel's greatest kings; Professor Kent terms him "in certain respects the David of Northern Israel," and draws a parallel between David's choice of Jerusalem and Omri's choice of Samaria. Omri was so powerful a ruler that to the Assyrians even down to Jehu's time the kings of Israel were known as "the house of Omri." We learn from the Moabite stone, which was discovered in 1868 in the land of ancient Moab, that "Omri was king of Israel and he afflicted Moab many days because Chemosh (the god of Moab) was angry with his land." Omri took possession of the land of Medeba and Israel held it during half his son's days, forty years. To the Arameans (Syrians) whose center was Damascus and who were the great land traders of the Eastern world, Omri was obliged to cede certain territory and certain rights in Samaria for their merchants (1 K. 20.34), but perhaps he was not loath to do this, as it was his policy to seek commercial greatness for Israel. He it must have been who arranged Ahab's marriage with Jezebel, seeking this alliance with Phœnicia for political and commercial reasons. (We know that the marriage must have taken place early in Omri's reign, because their grandson Ahaziah was born about the eleventh year of Ahab's reign, 2 K. 8.25-26.) Omri reigned 887 to 875 B.C.

The Early Part of Ahab's Reign. Ahab began to reign in the last year of Asa's reign over Judah, and he reigned twenty-two years. He reared an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria, made the Asherah, and did yet more to provoke Jehovah to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. Jeroboam had set the downward pace, it had gained momentum under his successors, especially Omri, and it now threatened to strike the lowest level, that of their pagan neighbors. It was in one of the darkest periods of the history of the Northern Kingdom that Elijah appeared.

Elijah and Jezebel. Schools of the prophets had been formed in various places and the prophets had established altars for the true worship of Jehovah. At their head was Elijah; at the head of the Baal worshippers was Queen Jezebel. Jezebel undertook to annihilate the prophets and thought herself successful, but Obadiah, who was over the king's household, feared Jehovah and hid a hundred prophets in caves and fed them with bread and water, 1 K. 18.3, 4. The time for heroic action had come.

I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, the people had learned under Moses: his champion now is the stern, uncompromising Gileadite, Elijah. The abruptness with which he is introduced is often commented upon, and many believe that the words of our first verse are the prophet's ultimatum, following an omitted talk with King Ahab. But all his appearances are unannounced and sudden. "The great man was always as lightning out of heaven," Carlyle comments: "the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they, too, would flame."

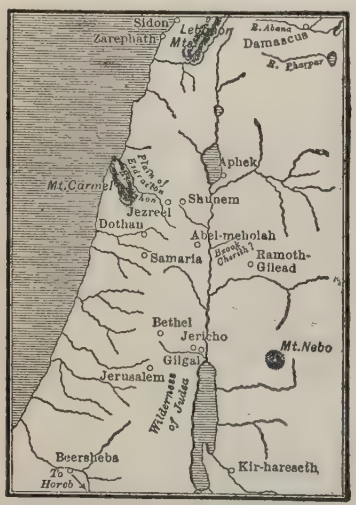
The Change in the Book of Kings. There is no parallel account of Elijah's activities in Chronicles, for that book is chiefly interested in the Kingdom of Judah. With the 17th chapter of 1 Kings we enter upon wholly different scenes. Somewhat monotonously we have been told hitherto of the

Kings of Israel and of Judah, good kings and bad kings, kings who worshipped Jehovah and kings who thought Jehovah and Baals might be worshipped side by side. Now we pass for a time from kings to prophets, from formal statements to graphic narratives, from the history of both kingdoms, to that of the Northern Kingdom exclusively.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Elijah is called the *Tishbite,* from Thisbe, whose location in Gilead has not been discovered. Gilead lay on the eastern side of the Jordan, from Moab on the south to the Yarmuk River on the north, but was a part of the northern kingdom. It is a land of broad plains and rocky hills. Speaking of the people of Gilead, Dean Farrar says: "They were the Highlanders of Palestine, and the name of their land implies its barren ruggedness. Though of Israelitish origin, they were closely akin to the Bedouin, swift, strong, temperate, fond of the great solitudes of nature, haters of cities, scorners of the softness of civilization. Elijah showed these characteristics."

From Gilead to *Zarephath* was a journey of ninety miles. Probably Elijah traveled at night up the Jordan valley and across the foothills of Lebanon to the Mediterranean. Zarephath (Sarepta, Lk. 4.26), was on the coast eight miles south of Sidon, near the modern village of Sarafend. It would be the last place where Jezebel would look for him, because it was in her father's kingdom.



Map Showing Places Connected with Elijah's Life

A Moslem wely, to quote the words of Professor Shailer Mathews, marks the site of the Crusaders chapel that, in its turn, marked the spot where the prophet lived and wrought his miracles. Here one comes upon the Moslem saint, however, rather than the Hebrew seer. Within the wely there is no tomb, but an empty recess covered by a curtain. For the Mohammedans hold that Elijah is not dead but flies "round and round the world," and once a week, on Thursday nights, he returns to this little wely, filling it with such light that no one dare enter. And in this borderland of faith and superstition Elijah, as beyond Jordan, vanishes.

King Ahab was doubtless at Samaria when Elijah suddenly appeared before him. From Ahab's and Jezebel's wrath Elijah fled to the Brook Cherith. This brook was "before the Jordan", that is, east of the Jordan, and therefore somewhere in Gilead. The traditional brook is the Wady Kelt. We know tradition is wrong here, for the Kelt is west of the Jordan, but the deep gorge through which this winter torrent flows would have been a fitting hiding-place for the fugitive. It is an awesome place. As we walked along the rim and looked down its deep, precipitous sides we pointed out a cave in which the prophet could have lived. Scarcely any spot in Palestine seems more remote from all the world than this deep, rocky canyon. The huts of hermits now cling to its rocky sides, and here is the monastery of St. George to which the Greek Church banishes its monks for punishment.

Assign Ps 85, 86, 93 and 146 of "In the Master's Country."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail. Was this written in the spirit of poetry? If not, we look at it from the Divine side, and say that it was a miracle, an evidence of God's direct interposition. Looking at it from the human side, of what was it an evidence? It was the result of

the woman's obedience to the prophet's word, of her willingness to share her scanty store. Had she withheld her hand from the distribution, the multiplication had not followed. A law was at work which runs through all human life, and is especially operative in our Christian experiences. It is the glory of a Sunday-school teacher's calling that this law never fails. His distribution, his bearing witness, of what he has experienced of God's goodness and love and power, is multiplied to his own good, and he has greater realization and augmented proof of the fact that God cares for him as he did for Elijah of old. His efforts to convey spiritual knowledge to other lives as surely deepen his own spiritual life as the widow's distribution of food multiplied her own supply. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, running over.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

The story of Elijah is one of the most interesting for little people in the whole Bible, revealing as it does "things surpassing fable, and yet true." You remember that Hilda, in Hawthorne's tale, remarks: "It annoys me very much, this inclination which most people have to explain away the wonder and the mystery out of everything." Children delight in wonder and mystery—they do not question its truth, and we have now come to a series of lessons about Elijah and Elisha so full of wonder and mystery that they will almost "teach themselves" to your pupils.

Let them see Elijah in his rude robe standing straight and tall, fearlessly looking into the eyes of King Ahab and telling him that a famine shall come to his land because he and his people no longer worship and obey God. Tell them of the King's anger, his wish to kill Elijah, and of Elijah's escape. Make the scene at the brook very vivid. Show Allison's picture of Elijah Fed by the Ravens, Soule No. 492, fifteen cents. Elaborate the thought of God's care of the birds and of his children (see For Younger Pupils, below). Tell in dialog form the story of Elijah and the poor widow of Zarephath, and express her boy's wonder and perhaps anger at seeing her give to a stranger from their scanty supply of food. See Keble's stanza, p. 350. God's care is your theme. Two little children were being taught the meaning of the verse "I will help thee". "If I put my finger on a hot stove, and ask God not to let the stove burn me, would he do it?" one of them asked. "No," answered her mother. "You see, people must have heat. Fire is a wonderful gift, but we must use it in the right way, or we get hurt." "Would God help me to get my arithmetic?" was the next question. "Yes,—if you *helped yourself* by studying each lesson as it came along. If you just closed the book and wouldn't try to learn he would not help you." "Do you think he will help Ethel, who is trying hard not to cry so much?" And the wise mother answered (in the story from which I am quoting): "Ethel is getting help through *you*, dear. That is one beautiful way God has of helping people. He very often helps them through their friends. Little sister Ethel is being helped through her big sister Marjorie, all because Marjorie is trying hard to stop teasing!" Marjorie was satisfied and asked no further questions, but Mother knew and Marjorie knew that the verse "I will help thee" was going to be very busy all week long. Tell your pupils this story, so that they, too, will put the verse into practice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

Who provideth for the raven his prey,
When his young ones cry unto God,
And wander for lack of food?

This question is asked in one of the Old Testament books (Job); what is your answer? Can you give an answer from Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount which we studied last year? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. At another time Jesus said that not a sparrow could fall to the ground without the heavenly Father's notice. The New Testament tells us

that God cares for the birds. Here in the Old Testament we are told that he cared for one man through the help of the birds. What birds? What man? Where? Elijah was at the brook Cherith in hiding: why?

For Older Pupils. What do you know about Elijah? If you were the editor of an international "Who's Who" in the middle of the ninth century B. C., the greatest name in all your record would be Elijah, but you could not tell where or when he was born, who his parents were, how he was brought up, where he lived and what he did during most of his life. Elijah came no one knows whence, he always appeared suddenly, and as suddenly disappeared, and yet he is one of the Titans of the Old Testament, and indeed of all literature. He so dominated the Hebrew imagination afterwards, that when Jesus wrought his mighty works the common people explained him by saying that he was Elijah. To this day he dominates the imagination of the orthodox Jew, who on the Passover evening places a cup on the table for the "prophet of Redemption." Majestic, stern, relentless, full of indignation at the people's apostasy, burning with zeal for Jehovah, this heroic prophet, this man of action, accomplished a noble work.

"The secret of true art" said the great French artist, Millet, "is to paint what one does not see." "What does that tell you?" he once asked an artist friend as he showed him a small canvas. It was a simple scene, picturing a country lane with a few dandelions and four o'clocks growing in the grass. "I don't know what I see," answered the friend after a long study of the picture, "but I hear the nightingale!"

Such true art is the story of Elijah as portrayed in the first Book of Kings. We don't know what we see but we hear the thunder and the very words of God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I God's Care

Special Providences. Elijah was sent to a lonely ravine. Who would care for him there? But Elijah went in faith, and his life was sustained in a wonderful way. Then he was sent to Phœnicia. Who in that heathen land would care for a prophet of Israel? Surely not a widow who had reached the end of her resources! Elijah's trust in God was still undaunted, and the widow's jar of meal and cruse of oil failed not!

Was it only in olden times and among the Hebrew people that God showed his loving care? He does not work what we call miracles now to sustain the life of his people, but how many modern instances can be recalled in which the daily bread has come in such new and unexpected ways as to seem "miraculously" provided!

There is always a drought somewhere, and there are always hungry servants of God. Is it the drought only that abides, while the ministering ravens have vanished? We must not forget that all things are God's servants, and our daily bread, however it comes, is still supplied by Elijah's God. We can no more understand how the soil and the sun and the rain can multiply a grain of wheat into many golden ears than we can understand how the widow's jar of meal was multiplied so as to last many months. Is not one as much a miracle to us as the other? The Lord will provide.

During the massacre of Saint Bartholomew in the reign of Charles IX of France, pastor Merlin escaped to a farm near Paris and lay concealed for days in a hay-loft. At length he became so nearly starved that he thought he might as well perish by the sword as by hunger, and was about to venture from his hiding place when he saw a hen come in. He waited till she went on her way rejoicing and then found the egg she had laid and this egg enabled him to keep in hiding two days longer. When he escaped he learned that had he started out earlier he would undoubtedly have been slain.

We call such an instance as this a special providence. We need the comforting assurance that special providences are not rare occurrences. "Mother, I think that God hears when we scrape the bottom of the barrel for it never gets quite empty," said a small lad to his widowed mother who was courageously caring for her little family, but was often anxiously wondering where the next meal would come from. The little comforter's trust in his heavenly

Father's care cheered his mother's heart and spurred her on to successful effort. If our faith were but more simple, we should take him at his word.

It Came to Pass that the Brook Dried Up. With some people providence is another word for getting what they ask for, and being able to complete their own plans. With many people providence has no meaning, or even existence, apart from the glad and successful passages of human experience. They find a friend, a way out of their difficulty, a solution of their personal problem; and lo! there is no doubt that providence had a hand in this. But hunger and pain and death; the hard way; gray days; black nights; lost powers; severed fellowships; surrendered purposes and broken hopes,—what do we say of these things? Hot and unwise words at times. The education of our faith is incomplete if we have not learned that there is a providence of loss, a ministry of failing and of fading things, a gift of emptiness. The material insecurities of life make for its spiritual establishment.

Providence is a progressive thing. It is a development. There is nothing final in it. That dwindling stream by which Elijah sat and mused is a true picture of the life of each one of us. "It came to pass that the brook dried up"—that is a history of our yesterday, and a prophecy of our morrows. I do not mean that these words tell the whole story of life, or even a very large part of it, for any one of us; but in some way or other we all have to learn the difference between trusting in the gift and trusting in the Giver. The gift may be for a while, but the Giver is the Eternal Love. The abiding thing in life is that word of the Lord that comes afresh into our hearts day by day.

Cherith was a difficult problem to Elijah until he got to Zarephath, and then it was all as clear as daylight. God's hard words are never his last words. The woe and the waste and the tears of life belong to the interlude and not to the finale.

Had Elijah been led straight to Zarephath he would have missed something that helped to make him a wiser prophet and a better man. He lived by faith at Cherith. And whensoever in your life and mine some spring of earthly and outward resource has dried up, it has been that we might learn that our help and hope are in God who made heaven and earth. *Condensed* from *The Pilgrim Church,* by *Percy C. Ainsworth.*

It was of God. In the year 1834, when cholera was raging in Stockholm, an artist was seized by the terrible disease. The crisis passed, he came again to his senses and wished to eat, but neither nurse nor physician came to his aid—they had both succumbed to the disease. The next day he was still hungrier, and was too weak to get up, and call for help, but he could pray earnestly that he who fed Elijah would feed him, too. An old woman opened the door, approached without saying a word, placed by his bed a little table on which there was food, and then went away as silently as she had come. The artist wondered whether it was an apparition or a reality, but he ate the food. Soon afterwards the woman returned and said the food was intended for the man who lived on the floor above, and she had made a mistake. "You have made no mistake," answered the artist, "it was truly God who sent you to me, for without you I would have starved here alone." After that he was cared for until restored to complete health.

II Service and Reward

The Widow's Reward.

She bounteous gives: but hard he seems of heart,
Who of such scanty store would crave a part,
Haply the child his little hand holds forth
That all his own may be.
Nay, simple one, thy mother's faith is worth
Healing and life to thee.
That handful given, for years ensures thee bread;
That drop of oil shall raise thee from the dead. *Keble.*

A Lesson from Pilgrim's Progress. One sight the Pilgrim saw was a man with a big bundle of cloth before him and quite a crowd of people about

him. He was hard at work cutting out garments from the cloth, not to show how clever he was, nor yet to see how much money he could make. The people who stood around him were poor people in rags, with no money at all —and he was giving away the cloth that he had cut out as fast as he could and sending those poorly dressed people away quite happy. There is a remarkable thing about this roll of cloth. Although the man kept on cutting and cutting, the bundle did not grow any the less. When the pilgrims were at the house of Gaius, old Mr. Honest asked a riddle, and this was it—

There was a man, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away the more he had.

Well, that was something like the man with the cloth, and, strange as it may seem, that is really what has been known to happen before. The more some people have given away to God and men, the richer they seemed to grow. I am quite sure of this, that the more we seek to help others for Christ's sake, and the more kindness we show and the more unselfish and loving we are, the more happiness and peace we shall have, and the more of the love of others, and the more we shall be like our Lord and Saviour. Let us begin now to try to think of others, to do something kind, helpful, unselfish, some act of love, and so learn the lesson from the man with the bundle of cloth. *Charles Brow,* in *Talks to Children.*

III Raven-Funds

From Our Surplus. During the Civil War the missionaries on the frontier were suffering for lack of food and clothing. Sheldon Jackson was working in Minnesota at the time, and he was instrumental in securing boxes of clothing and additional funds to supplement the meager salaries of missionaries. So providential was the help, and so unexpected, that it received the title of "The Raven Fund".

No doubt your church and Sunday-school have continued to this day such good work and twice a year, at least, boxes of good things are sent from your abundance to those who lack.

Are you as a class contributing to the Department for Utilizing Surplus Material of the World's Sunday School, that department which is another "Raven Fund" for missionaries? Pictures are especially wanted, pictures large and small, pictures about the Bible lessons and beautiful pictures of any description, then lesson helps, maps, cards, etc., even larger articles like typewriters and organs. What will you send? Write to Dr. Samuel D. Price, Superintendent of the Department, Headquarters of the World's Sunday School Association, Metropolitan Tower, New York City, for the address of a missionary of your denomination who needs what you have to give. Tell him what your denomination is, whether "North" or "South" if there are the two branches, and enclose a stamp for a reply.

How God Made Use of Siakwe's Humble Store. On one of the small islands of Micronesia there was a mission and to it there came from another island a young woman named Siakwe. She spent six months at the mission and learned to read ten pages in the English primer and a little in the Gilbert Islands Bible, and she committed to memory the ten commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and twenty Christian hymns. Then she returned to her home, and unknown to the missionaries took up the work of teaching all the people in Nukuor. What she knew was meagre, but "she scraped the bottom of her barrel in giving to its last grain her handful of meal." When at last a missionary came over to her island he found a miracle had been wrought—the people were all Christians! They could read ten pages in the primer, recite the ten commandments, and keep them, pray to God in the words of Jesus, and sing twenty Christian hymns of cheer and comfort. Through Siakwe God had been working. Now there is a little Christian Church on the island with a cistern beside it, so that in time of drought water may not fail. Did not Siakwe, like the widow of Zarephath, give food and drink from a very humble store, and has not God wrought the increase?

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US

Elijah, who was among the mightiest of God's servants, had to learn that he was just as dependent upon God as was the humblest man in Israel.

"The use of earthly goods for God's service may not be rewarded with the increase of them; but, if the barrel is not kept full of meal, the heart will be kept full of peace, which is better; no sacrifice for God is ever thrown away."

Our Prayer. Our Father who art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread, we pray. Even as thou didst care for Elijah, so thou dost care for us. For food and drink and shelter and home, for all good things, we thank thee, Lord. Help us to rest in the thought that every day, every hour, every moment of our lives are in thy hands, that we need never be anxious for our lives, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, nor yet for our bodies, what we shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heavens, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, but thou feedest them. And we know that we are of more value than they. Heavenly Father, we will trust in thy love and care.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Modern "troublers" like Elijah, who will not let evil alone.
2. Special Providences.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the entire eighteenth chapter of First Kings and Psalm 115. 2. How long had the drought lasted? 3. Why did Elijah return from Zarephath? 4. Tell about the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah (1 K. 18. 1-15.) 5. Tell about Elijah's meeting with Ahab. 6. What was the test that Elijah demanded? 7. Where is Mt. Carmel and where was the contest held? (*Guide,* p. 354.) 8. What did the priests of Baal do and for how long? 9. What did Elijah say to them, mockingly? 10. What is said in James 5.17, 18 about Elijah's prayers? 11. What happened after the people acknowledged God? 12. On what occasion did Joshua offer the people the alternative between serving Jehovah or false gods? (Josh. 24.15.) 13. What words of Christ tell that one cannot "limp between two sides"?

Questions to Think About. 1. What reason had Elijah to fear Ahab? 2. What reason had Ahab to fear Elijah? 3. Why did Ahab and the priests of Baal obey Elijah? 4. For what purpose was the water used? 5. Where could so much water have been obtained in a time of drought? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 355.) 6. Why did Elijah address Jehovah as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel? (*Guide,* p. 352.) 7. Why did the people fall on their faces? (*Guide,* p. 353.) 8. What is the meaning of the account of the contest between Elijah and the prophet of Baal? (*Guide,* p. 354.) 9. Describe Elijah's character as shown in this lesson. 10. When and how did Franklin call down fire from heaven?

Memory and Note Book Work. Commit to memory Elijah's prayer. In your "Book of the Prophets" begin a Life of Elijah. Today write How God Cared for Elijah.

Questions upon the Books of Chronicles. 1. Why are there two Books of Chronicles? 2. What sources of information are mentioned in the Books? 3. Who gave them their title? 4. What are they called in the Septuagint Version? 5. What is the Septuagint Version? 6. What is the Syrian title, and why is it appropriate? 7. When were they written? 8. What period of history do they cover? 9. What books do they duplicate in part? 10. What portion is parallel with the Book of Samuel? 11. What portion is parallel with the Book of Kings? 12. How do we know that the writer of Chronicles was familiar with these earlier Books? 13. How do the parallel accounts differ in Chronicles from those in Samuel and Kings? 14. After the Division of the Kingdom the history of which kingdom is followed? 15. How does the writer regard the other kingdom? 16. What striking things does Chronicles omit? 17. What are its chief additions? 18. What great personalities appear in the Books? 19. What viewpoints have the writers of Kings and Chronicles in common? 20. In what do they differ? 21. Write an outline of the Books. 22. What would you say about their literary value? 23. What are their lessons for today?

LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 5

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

Golden Text

Jehovah is far from the wicked;
But he heareth the prayer of the righteous. Proverbs 15.29

LESSON I Kings 18.16-40: verses 30-39 printed
MEMORIZE verses 36,37

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of Jehovah came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. 34 And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. 35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. 36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the *evening* oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. 37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

30. *And Elijah said unto the people.* Read the first twenty-nine verses of this chapter.—*Repaired the altar.* Carmel was a "high place" where God had been worshipped.

31. *Took twelve stones.* Compare Josh. 4.5. There were now two kingdoms, but the prophet recalls their original unity by taking twelve stones, the number of all the tribes. "In that supreme hour Elijah will not own a divided kingdom. Israel is still ideally one, and Jehovah is God of all" (*Green.*)—*Israel shall be thy name.* Gen. 32.28; 35.10. The Northern Kingdom had appropriated to itself the name that belonged to all the tribes.

32. *A trench.* To hold the water poured over the sacrifice, v. 33.—*Two measures of seed.* Or, *a two-seah measure,* RVm. The third part of an ephah, about two and a half gallons.

33-35. An account of the precautions taken to let the people see there was no fraud, no concealed fire.—*He put the wood in order.* Lev. 1. 7-8. *Fill with water.* There are perennial springs on Carmel which must have withstood the drought, or the water could have been brought from the sea.—*Do it the third time.* "Few of us have faith like this! We are not so sure of God that we dare to pile difficulties in his way. We all try our best to make it easy for him to help us. Yet what Elijah had we, too, may have, by prayer and fasting" (*F. B. Meyer*).

36. *The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel.* This reference to the Hebrew fathers was common and served to remind the people of God's favor to them in the past.—*I am thy servant.* "One man with God at his back, who fears nothing, can work marvels" (*Maclaren*).—*I have done all these things at thy word.* Compare Jer. 14.22.

37. *And that thou hast turned their heart back again.* Or, *for thou didst turn their heart backward,* RVm.

38. *Then the fire of Jehovah fell.* Compare 2 Ch. 7.1; Heb. 12.29; Job 1.16. Compare the day when Benjamin Franklin went out and called down lightning from heaven. "God still answers by the fire of the Holy Spirit's descent on his Church; but in order to his presence, there must be (1) the rebuilt altar of true Christian unity; (2) the bravery which will stand alone for God; (3) the emptying of God's servants of all self-confidence, and their filling with the faith which reckons on God absolutely" (*F. B. Meyer*). "God's hands or bound or open are, as Moses or Elijah prays."—*And consumed the stones and the dust.* The revelation of God's power was convincing. See p. 354.

39. *They fell on their faces.* Either in reverence or because of excitement.—*Jehovah, he is God.* Verses 21, 24. "God is reality, all else is shadow."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

26. *And they took the bullock which was given them.* They could not have been pleased with this test demanded by Elijah, but the people had agreed to the proposal and they could not refuse compliance as did an African witch doctor. He claimed that his big fetish would protect him from arrows. The missionary took up a bow, fitted an arrow to it, walked off a short distance, and aimed at the African. Alarmed, the latter exclaimed, "White man, what are you going to do?" "Let's try and see whether your fetish will protect you from the arrow," said the missionary. "O, no! white man," the African returned, "let's not try!"

27. *He is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth.* The gods of Asiatic idolaters have different functions to fulfil, and require sleep and rest. Vishnu sleeps four months in the year. Buddha is represented in his temple as asleep, though his eyes are open; and according to many fables in the *Pooranas* the gods are often on journeys, expeditions. *Adam Clark,* in *Commentary.*

When, after long pleadings and many offerings, an idol does not respond to the request of the worshipper, the people have been known to bore a hole in the back of the idol and place therein a live scorpion to wake up the idol. *Elliot I. Osgood,* in *Breaking Down Chinese Walls.*

33. *Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering.* Elijah took great pains to prevent any suspicion that there was fire concealed beneath the altar. An ancient writer, quoted by Calmet, says. "I speak as an eye-witness. In the altars of the idols, there are beneath the altar channels, and underneath a concealed pit; the deceivers enter these, and blow up a fire from beneath upon the altar, by which many are deceived and believe that the fire comes from heaven." In such deception ancient priests seem to have been adepts. At Pompeii a secret staircase has been disclosed from which pipes led to the back of the head of Isis; through these pipes the priests uttered her oracles.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What prophet had told the Children of Israel to choose between the Canaanite gods and Jehovah, and what had been their answer? What prayers have we had in our lessons this year? Where were the chief places of worship in the Northern Kingdom? What had Elijah told King Ahab?

Elijah's Meeting with Obadiah. Three years have passed since Elijah told Ahab that there would be no rain in the kingdom till he said the word, and the famine had been severe in Samaria. At last Ahab called Obadiah, his superintendent, and told him to go in one direction while he went in the other in search of fountains of water for their perishing horses and mules. To Elijah had come God's promise of rain, and the call to go and face the angry king. He met Obadiah, who recognized him at once and called him "my lord Elijah." When Elijah bade him tell Ahab that Elijah was there, Obadiah shrank from the task in terror. The king had sought everywhere for Elijah, and should he, Obadiah, tell the king that he had found Elijah and then Elijah would disappear again? His own life would pay the forfeit. All

this Obadiah told Elijah, and added: "It was I who hid one hundred prophets of God in a cave and fed them when Jezebel had ordered them slain: and now you bid me go and tell Ahab that you are here and he will slay me!" But when Elijah assured him that he would not disappear, Obadiah carried out his command. Ahab came to meet Elijah.

Elijah's Meeting with Ahab. "Thou troubler of Israel" was Ahab's angry greeting. Boldly Elijah returned the remark and told the king that he was the real troubler of the nation, for he had forsaken the commandments of the Lord and had followed the gods of Jezebel, his heathen wife, and then Elijah ordered the king to assemble on Mount Carmel the priests of Baal and of the Asherah. The king did the prophet's bidding.

Elijah's Test. The people assembled on Mount Carmel and Elijah sternly said to them: "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." They had no word to answer. "I am the only prophet of Jehovah left," continued Elijah, "and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. We will have a test. Let them bring two bullocks, and let them prepare one for sacrifice and I will prepare the other; then call on your god and I will call on Jehovah, and the God that answers by fire, let him be God." The people approved.

Efforts of the Priests of Baal. The priests of Baal did as Elijah said, and from morning till noon they cried, "O Baal, hear us," and leaped about the altar, but there was no answer. At noon Elijah mocked them: "Cry aloud," he said, "perhaps your god is meditating, or has gone on a journey, or is asleep." Frantically they kept up their fruitless scream, and gashed themselves with knives until the time of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice, nor any that regarded.

Elijah's Victory. Then Elijah called the people to him where he stood, the one against the many. Quietly he made his preparations. He repaired the altar; taking twelve stones he built it up, made a trench around it, piled on the wood and then laid upon it the slain bullock. Three times he had four jars of water poured upon the offering, till the trenches were filled. And then he called upon the Lord: "O let it be known this day," he cried, "that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, that this people may know that thou art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." Then fell the fire of the Lord, the story tells us, and consumed offering and wood and stones and water. And the people fell on their faces crying, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God."

The End of the Drought. The prophets of Baal were taken down to the Brook Kishon and slain. Elijah made Ahab eat and drink, for rain was coming, the long drought was soon to be ended. He ascended Mount Carmel and prayed, bidding his servant look towards the sea whence the rain would come. At last the servant reported a small cloud, the size of a man's hand. "Go and tell Ahab to make haste to get back to Jezreel, for the rain is coming," he commanded the servant. The heavens grew black with clouds and wind, the longed-for rain came in torrents. In great exultation Elijah girded up his mantle and ran before Ahab's chariot across the plains even to Jezreel.

The Meaning of the Account. In "The Old Testament and Modern Life", Stafford A. Brooke states the meaning succinctly: This is clear—that we have in this story of Elijah the record of the actual struggle which went on in Israel for at least fifty years between monotheism and idolatry; between puritanism and immorality; between the individual consciences and a despotism; between nationalism and foreign influences. Politically, socially, morally, and religiously Elijah represented and concentrated this struggle, and we see it here, in the Book of Kings, drawn for us in the form in which men a generation or two later than the events looked back upon it.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Mount Carmel is a long ridge whose western end is a bold promontory projecting into the Mediterranean Sea. Its name means "the Garden", for it is "the first of Israel's hills to meet the rains, and they give it their best"; most of the hill in ancient times was cultivated. Its eastern bluff is 1750 feet above

the sea. A series of rocky terraces leads down to the Plain of Esdraelon which extends eastward to the Jordan, threaded at the time of our lesson by the white, sandy riverbed of the then waterless Kishon. On this Plain Elijah and Obadiah probably met. Mount Carmel is one of the distinctive features of Palestine, but its fame rests upon the story of the great contest fought upon it between Elijah, the prophet of Jehovah, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

The whole mountain is now called Mar Elias, the Mountain of Elijah. Tradition declares a cave toward the sea, beneath a great Carmelite Monastery, The Deir-el Mar Elyas, to have been the home of the stern prophet of reform. The scene of the contest is localized by tradition at the southeastern extremity of the ridge, and is called "The Place of Burning." Nearby is a spring which Tristam shows to be a never-failing one from the fact that its sides have shell molluscs of a species never found except where the water is perennial. The lower slopes of the mountain could accommodate several thousand people. From here to Jezreel is a distance of eighteen miles.

Assign ¶37, "In the Master's Country."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

From an article written by Bishop Joseph F. Berry I adapt these words for you and this lesson:—Let us go to the secret place where Elijah went. Let us pray as we have never prayed before. Let us plead because of the unmeasured need. Roll upon us, O God, the burden of our pupils' need! Give us a vision to see that we are approaching a crisis in their lives. Take sleep from our eyes. Take joy from our hearts. Give to us an agony of desire. May we wrestle, wrestle, wrestle, until the cloud of promise appears in the sky.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

A mother had an only child which was feeble-minded. He was not bright like most boys and girls, and could not be taught anything. For twenty years that mother had cared for him as though he were a baby, for he was no wiser than a little babe. "Oh, if he would only know me, if he would only show once that he knows I am his mother," she often said with tears. Tell your pupils about this mother, and then tell them that God had been caring for the people of Israel for many, many years, and yet they now showed no signs that they knew him. Recall the golden calves of Jeroboam and the idol worship that followed, and tell them that through Elijah God would call the people back to him, make them see that he was their Father. Recall this mother when you come in your story to Elijah's prayer. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou Jehovah art God and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

The lesson is crowded with dramatic seenes and your task of making it vivid to your pupils is an easy one. Review Elijah's words to Ahab and God's subsequent care of Elijah (last lesson). Describe the condition of the country, grass burnt, wells and brooks dried up, people hungry, horses perishing. God told Elijah to return to his own country and meet Ahab, for he would now send rain. Omit the meeting with Obadiah, for you will need all your time to give details and make the scene on Carmel vivid. Tell the angry king's words, Elijah's answer, and the king's unwilling obedience to his command. Draw an altar on one side of your blackboard, placing beside it a small E, for Elijah and a large G, for God. On the other side of the blackboard outline another altar, and make many marks around it for Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Show a picture of Elijah's Sacrifice, Wilde No. 493. Your story should include all the remainder of chapter 18.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. You have seen many a fountain with the water gushing from a representation of a lion's head. Do you know why the lion's head is so much used on fountains? It is a symbol that came to us from the Greeks and Romans, and to them from the Egyptians. To the ancient Egyptians the rising of the waters of the Nile was the most important event in the year, for to its waters was due the fertility of their valley. Because this took

place in the constellation of Leo, the Lion, the lion became their symbol of life-giving waters, and they carved the lion's head on all their fountains.

For a long time now, some three years, no life-giving rain has fallen in the Kingdom of Israel. Why? By questions rapidly recall the situation, the beginning and the growth of idolatry, the crisis, the appearance of Elijah, his prophecy, flight to Cherith, stay in Zarephath, and the reason for his reappearing in his own country. Ask the pupil to whom the question was especially assigned to describe the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah. Call upon another pupil to tell about the meeting between Elijah and Ahab. Have Mount Carmel located.

For Older Pupils. In the year 1832 there had long been drought in the land of the Betschuanen. Finally the people summoned a magician to come and make the rain fall. He postponed his coming until the wind had brought a heavy cloud. The rejoicing among the people was great. They praised the magician and his gods, and mocked the God of the missionaries Moffat and Hamilton, for he had not sent the rain. But the scene soon changed. The cloud passed without bringing the rain, and the heathen in their rage, despite the efforts of the missionaries, put the magician to death. All the particulars of the story of the contest on Mount Carmel are given to show that Elijah, unlike that unhappy magician, was acting in accordance with Jehovah's designs. In all the year's lessons there is no more spectacular scene than that enacted on Mount Carmel, and familiar as it is to us, we can profitably recall it and learn its lessons.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Decision Day

How long go ye Limping between Two Sides! Think of the *misery* of indecision. "Why halt ye?" The image is drawn from those who go lame, who totter, resting first on one foot and then on the other. How deeply, inexpressibly unhappy is the life of vacillation! Sir John Bowring tells of a poor fellow, who was a strong Protestant, falling a victim to the strange hallucination that one of his legs had become Roman Catholic, and henceforth his life was full of unspeakable wretchedness. Yet who shall express the misery of a soul divided within itself on the highest question of all? Not a mental delusion this time, but a conscious, terrible, and voluntary confusion and contradiction within the moral personality. No dignity, progress, or peace. Now bowing the knee to reason, and again to appetite; now to conscience, and then to self-will; now to the living, loving God and his son Jesus Christ, and anon to an ugly idol. Sinning and repenting. Hobbling up and down; limping first to one side and then to the opposite; shuffling to and fro, ashamed and despairing. How much truer, nobler, happier, to take our stand on the Lord's side!

Think of the perils of indecision. A crisis like this is really one of acute danger. Many undecided souls feel that they may safely leave their decision an open question month after month and year after year. It is a great mistake, and may easily be a fatal one. Everybody knows the extreme danger in many worldly situations of being "caught between two minds"; and such danger is not less in spiritual perplexity. We are then peculiarly exposed to temptations of all kinds, and are specially defenseless. All the forces of the soul are suspended. Fine opportunity is given for evil passions to grow upon us. Irresolution in the penitent, like lukewarmness in the saint, soon becomes more pernicious and hopeless than a decided state of denial and rejection. Sailors know how anxious the moments are when a tacking ship is "in stays," when the sails are wildly fluttering before being once more set to the wind; and the sooner the spiritual transition is over and the soul adjusts itself and resigns itself to the gales of grace the better. Here, above all places, "to hesitate, is to be lost." *Condensed* from *The Education of the Heart* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

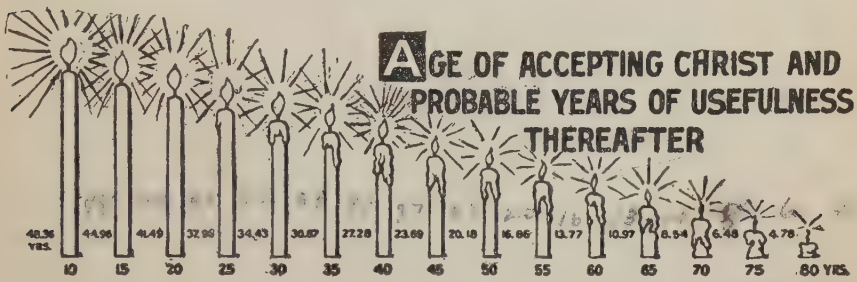
Age of Making the Great Decision and Probable Years of Usefulness thereafter. The Committee on Evangelization of the World's Sunday-school Association has made the computation for the accompanying diagram and issued the following thought-compelling statements:

A very large percentage, and, in most schools, a majority of the scholars, come from homes where the Scriptures are not taught, the subject of religion is seldom discussed, family worship is not observed, and, at best, the attitude of the family is one of indifference toward Jesus Christ and the sacrifice which he made for sinners. The only religious instruction received by this class of scholars is that which comes to them through the agency of the Sunday-school.

Careful study has taught us that the responsiveness of the child to the claims of Jesus Christ reaches a climax at fifteen or sixteen years of age. Scholars above these ages, leaving the Sunday-school without having made a profession of their faith, do so with the likelihood of their ever being won to Christ greatly diminished. Few indeed, comparatively speaking, confess Jesus Christ after passing the age of twenty.

Every scholar of suitable age, if not an actual seeker of salvation, by his very presence in the Sunday-school offers an exceptional opportunity for the teacher to present the claims of Jesus Christ.

We cannot over-estimate the importance of "putting first things first" and sounding the evangelistic note upon every favorable opportunity. Investigation shows that five of every seven scholars leave the Sunday-school without a confession of their faith in Jesus Christ.



The greatest need of our Sunday-schools is not improved lessons or improved methods. It is an adequate appreciation of our opportunity and responsibility.

Observation and experience justify the declaration that less time and effort are necessary for the winning of twenty children to Jesus Christ than one adult of say fifty years of age; and, other things being equal, a child won to him at ten is worth more in the extension of the Kingdom than many adults confessing Christ at fifty years of age.

II The Only True God

A Test between Jehovah and Pele. Once the natives of the Hawaiian Islands had a dread goddess whom they called Pele. She dwelt in the fiery part of the Volcano Kilauea, and her power was great and terrible. The Princess Kapiolani arranged a test, that she might prove to her people that Pele was powerless. She made a pilgrimage of a hundred miles, most of the way on foot, to the great crater. There she was met by a missionary who had walked barefoot (for he had no shoes) from Hilo, twenty-five miles away. The two then descended from the rim to the "black rock." There they were within sight and hearing of some eighty watching natives, and the Princess said to them: "The Lord is my God. He kindled these fires. I fear not Pele. If I perish from the anger of Pele, you may fear the power of Pele. If I do not perish, all the gods of Hawaii are vain." The terrified people expected to see the fire leap upon her for thus defying their goddess, but she stood there calmly, sang a hymn of praise, and then returned to them unharmed. Her test did much to convince the Hawaiians that their gods were vain, and that "Jehovah, he is God," even as Elijah's test convinced the Israelites.

Jehovah and Kali. In 1906, Mrs. Butler attended the India Jubilee, where one hundred and fifty thousand native Christians hailed her as the "Empress

of Indian Missions," and sang *"Jai Prabu Yesu!* Victory to Jesus!" In reply to Dr. Taylor's remark that "This is wonderful!" Mrs Butler said: "To you it is wonderful. To me it is a miracle. I cannot help thinking of the day, fifty years ago, when Dr. Butler and I first landed in Calcutta. Everything we saw and heard seemed to tell us of darkness and paganism. We found that day the multitudes tripping through the streets after the image of the heathen goddess of war shouting 'Victory to Kali!' And to think that now, only fifty years later, there are so many hundreds of thousands in India whose hearts sing 'Victory to Jessus!' It is one of God's miracles!"

Jehovah, he is God. The natives of the New Hebrides Islands were at first very hostile to their missionary, the Rev. John G. Paton. They set fire to the church and then to the reed fence around his house. Paton and his friends knew that the savages intended to kill them should they attempt to make their escape after their building was afire. The intrepid missionary went out and began putting out the fire. What followed he tells. "The savages yelled in rage and urged each other to strike the first blow, but the Invisible One restrained them. I stood invulnerable beneath his invisible shield, and succeeded in rolling back the tide of flame from our dwelling house. At this dread moment occurred an incident which my readers may explain as they like, but which I trace directly to the interposition of my God. A rushing and roaring sound came from the south, like the noise of a mighty engine or of muttering thunder. Every head was instinctively turned in that direction, and they knew from previous hard experience that it was one of their awful tornadoes of wind and rain. The mighty roaring of the wind, the black cloud pouring down unceasing torrents, and the whole surroundings awed these savages into silence. Some began to withdraw from the scene; all lowered their weapons of war and several, terror-stricken, exclaimed: 'That is Jehovah's rain. Truly, their Jehovah God is fighting for them and helping them. Let us away!' A panic seized upon them. They threw away their remaining torches. In a few minutes they had all disappeared in the bush, and I was left alone, praising God for his marvelous works."

III Jehovah Heareth Prayer

Heathenism has no True Prayer. What a contrast between the wild, monotonously repeated cry of the Baal-worshippers and the true, fervent prayer of Elijah! In some respects Elijah's prayer is a model one; it is calmly confident, conscious of his personal relationship to God as his servant, desirous only of God's glory, and asks a blessing for others, beseeching God that the people may be led to know him, and turn their hearts to him. In all heathenism no such prayer is ever offered. "Wild cries and passionate desires, flung upward to an unloved god, are not prayers; and that solace and anchor of the troubled soul is wanting in all the dreary lands given up to idolatry."

Missionaries ask the worshippers before the great Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Burma, "Are you praying to Gautama, or the pagoda?" and receive the answer, "I am praying to no one." "Then what are you praying for?" "For nothing, but I hope in some way, I know not how, to get benefit."

In a temple of Japan a wire netting surrounds a huge idol, and visitors wonder at the many wads of paper adhering to the netting, and they wonder still more when they learn their purpose. On these papers prayers were written, then they were chewed into pulp, and the wads hurled at the idol. Had they entered through the holes in the netting and thus reached the idol, the prayers would have been "heard," but as they were not well aimed and lodged on the netting, they were not answered!

"There is no relation between Buddha and us," said a young Buddhist priest. "He has no power to create the world nor to save us." All the gods of the heathen are vain, and all so-called prayers to them are as futile as those wads of paper in that Japanese temple.

The Source of Strength and Power. It was not till after Elijah prayed that the fire of the Lord fell. "O God, stand by me against all the wisdom of the world," Luther prayed in agony that memorable night in April, 1521. "Thou alone canst. The cause is Thine, not mine. I rely upon no man, that were useless; everything human fails. O God, dost Thou not hear me? My

God, art Thou dead? No, Thou canst not die. Thou art only hidden from me. Thou hast chosen me for this cause. Stand Thou by me in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, who is my Protector, my Shield and my Strong Tower." Thus Luther wrestled with God in prayer all that long night, and the next morning calm and firm in strength received from God, he was able to face the Emperor and the realm. Why are we ever weak and helpless when that same strength may be ours?

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Before whom I stand, whose servant I am. These were the thoughts that nerved Elijah to his great task; such thoughtts will nerve us for any crisis.

Life is service: whom will you serve? You can choose whom you will serve, but you cannot choose not to serve. You must choose to serve either God or self. Whom? If you have chosen God, does your daily life prove this?

Our Prayer: O God of Elijah, in whose hands are fire and rain, life and death, all things, we acknowledge thy sovereign power. Thou, O Jehovah, art God. Thou art also our Father, ever ready to grant us that which we ask, when we ask in accordance with thine all-wise, all-loving will. This is our earnest petition today, that we may be given the power to wholly dethrone self and to worthily serve thee. In Christ's name we ask this.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Elijah the reformer of Samaria and Savonarola the reformer of Florence.
2. Troublers: God's champions against wrong.
3. Shall we pray for rain? See p. 781, *Outlook,* Aug. 1, 1914.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What happened at the close of the great contest on Mt. Carmel? (1 K. 18.40-46.) 2. What effect did Ahab's report have on Jezebel? 3. What earlier deed of Jezebel's gave Elijah cause to fear her wrath? (1 K. 18.3.) 4. Give an account of Elijah's flight to Horeb. 5. Where was Beersheba? 6. What can you tell about the juniper tree? (*Guide,* p. 362.) 7. When was Moses in despair? (Num. 11.10-17.) 8. Read Ps. 55.1-6, which well expresses Elijah's feeling. 9. How did Job express his utter despondency in Job 6.8-10? 10. When did John the Baptist feel that his life had been in vain, and why was he so discouraged? 11. Describe Mount Horeb. (*Guide,* p. 363.) 12. Why is Elijah so different at Mount Carmel and at Mount Horeb? 13. Read Moses' experience in Ex. 32 and 33, and compare it with that of Elijah. 14. What other strong characters in the Bible show the need of the warning: Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall? 15. How was Elijah convinced that God's cause should not fail? (15-18.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What must Elijah have expected after his victory on Carmel? 2. Why did Jezebel send her message? 3. Was it cowardly in Elijah to flee? 4. What reason can you give for his despair? (*Guide,* p. 365.) 5. Is it ever right to long for death? 6. Do you approve of Elijah's answer to the question, What doest thou here? 7. What does *jealousy for* another mean? (*Guide,* p. 360.) 8. What does the contrast between the wind and earthquake and fire on the one hand, and the still small voice on the other teach? (*Guide,* p. 361.) 9. Why is Horeb called "the Mount of God"? 10. Why did Elijah wrap his face in his mantle? (*Guide,* p. 362.) 11. Was there anything unreal about Elijah's meeting with God? (*Guide,* p. 366.) 12. What people today kiss images? 13. What is the meaning of our Golden Text? (*Guide,* p. 366.) 14. Are you ever gloomy and despondent? 11. How can you overcome such moods?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Elijah write Part II, Elijah's Interview with Obadiah; Part III. Elijah's Interview with Ahab; and Part IV, The Contest on Mount Carmel.

ELIJAH'S FLIGHT AND RETURN

Golden Text

Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46.10

LESSON I Kings 19: verses 8-18 printed MEMORIZE verses 9,10

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.
9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the ea thquake: 12 and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenants, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.
15 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king, over Syria; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet will I leave *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *Forty days and forty nights.* The time given plainly connects Elijah with Moses, Ex. 34.28. It was a journey of about one hundred and eighty miles from Beersheba to Horeb.—*The Mount of God.* So called in Ex. 3.1; 4.27, because here God manifested himself. "Elijah was obeying the same impulse as might send an American to Plymouth Rock. The restorer of the Law and Religion of Israel might well seek renewed strength in the place where that Law and Religion had first been given" (*Maclaren*). Every feature would remind him of the time when Moses communed there with God, amid fire and tempest and thick darkness. "So God takes us in despondency to places where men of old time have been blessed. We may find, for instance, in some book a spiritual experience reproduced" (*R. Bruce Taylor*).

9, 10. Repeated in 13, 14.

10. *I have been very jealous for Jehovah.* Our words *jealous* and *zeal* are kindred in origin, and may be traced back to the Greek word which means *boiling.* To be *jealous for* someone is to be burning with zeal for that one's interests. Elijah's entire ministry is marked by his zeal for God. "And to what purpose, he would say, when God is so remiss concerning his own honor?" (*Wood*).—*God of hosts.* The title is here given perhaps, because Baal and Astarte were the heathen sun and moon deities, and there were other deities of the host of heaven.—*And slain thy prophets.* Elijah thinks, therefore, that all hope of reformation is lost, for the prophets were the only ones who could

bring about a change for the better.—*I, even I only, am left.* See v. 18 and the words of Paul in Rom. 11.2-5. "Among the faithless, faithful only he" (*Milton*). Occasions come when every one feels that, as the French express it, On n'a que soi—One only has oneself.

11. *Stand upon the mount before God.* "We may be embittered by the friction of life, but if we lift our eyes to the hills and let the beauty of the Lord our God sweep through us, all is changed. The jarred and impoverished self is lost, and comes back to us purified, all its stains removed by the Divine Spirit" (*Frank Johnson*).—*Behold, Jehovah passed by.* In the symbols of his power. Compare the Theophany of Ex. 33.18-23; 34.5-6.—*Jehovah was not in the wind, not in the earthquake.* The lesson Elijah was thus taught was that when the great contests had failed of result, gentle and long-continued means would prevail: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts, Zech. 4.6. Storm and earthquake and lightning might have been expressly sent at this time by God as revelations to Elijah of himself: or the natural coming of these forces might have set the prophet to thinking about God's ways of working, and thus it was by divine suggestion that God worked.

12. *A still small voice.* Hebrew, *a sound of gentle stillness,* RVm. Compare Job. 4.16: There was silence, and I heard a voice. Elijah's harsh methods, deeds of violence, were not God's methods: God reveals himself in deeds of tolerance and kindness.

> "Hark! a still, small voice,
> Steals on the ear, to say, Jehovah's choice
> Is ever with the soft, meek, tender soul;
> By soft, meek, tender ways he loves to draw
> The sinner, startled by his ways of awe;
> Here is our Lord, and not where thunders roll." (*Keble.*)

13. *And it was so.* When he heard the still small voice pleading within him, a change came over his turbulent mood. See Mr. Johnson's words, p. 366.—*He wrapped his face in his mantle.* So Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God, Ex. 3.6; and in Ex. 33.20 we read, "Man shall not see me and live". Elijah's mantle was of sheepskin (Zech. 13.4), and his girdle of leather (2 K. 1.8).—*And went out.* He left his dismal cave, his self-delusion, self-conceit, and apprehension—and stood before God—surveyed the whole situation.

15. *Jehovah said.* The voice answered Elijah's "I only": God has other helpers besides Elijah.—*Go.* He had wandered from his task. So Keble:—

> Perhaps our God may of our conscience ask,
> What doest thou here, frail wanderer from thy task!

Go. This is the word for all discouraged ones. Get to work, do something for others, fill your mind and heart so full of work for others that there is not room for your own discouragements.—*On thy way.* Back to the Kingdom of Israel.—*To the wilderness of.* Or, *by the wilderness to,* RVm.—*Thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.* Hazael was the general of Ben-hadad, who was then king of Syria. See 2 K. 8.7-15.

16. *Jehu the son of Nimshi.* He was the son of Jehoshaphat, the grandson of Nimshi, 2 K. 9.2, an officer at this time in Ahab's army.—*Shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel.* See 2 K. 9.1-6. Elijah did not himself anoint Jehu, nor are we told that he anointed Hazael; directly or indirectly he caused them to be anointed. Through Hazael, 2 K. 10.32 and Jehu, 2 K. 9 and 10, God was to execute judgment on the house of Ahab: "Jehu was a scourge of the Lord to the people, and Hazael also generously afflicted Israel."—*Elisha shalt thou anoint.* See verses 19-21.—*To be prophet in thy room.* Elijah had thought himself necessary to the work of reformation; he learns that "God buries the workman, but the work goes on," and that it would take time to abolish idolatry. He could not expect the work to be accomplished in his lifetime.

17. *The sword of Hazael.* 2 K. 8.12; 13.3, 22.—*Shall Jehu slay.* 2 K. 9.14-10.25.—*Shall Elisha slay.* "This clause is enigmatical. Elisha can hardly be said to have slain any. He lived, on the whole, in friendship with the kings both of Israel and of Aram, and in peace and honor in the cities. But the

general idea seems to be that he would carry on the mission of Elijah alike for the guidance and the heaven-directed punishments of the kings and nations, and that the famines, raids, and humiliations which rendered his nation miserable under the sons of Ahab should be elements of his sacred mission" (*Farrar*).

18. *Seven thousand.* A round number. Elijah was not the only worshipper of God. There are usually more good people than one may think.—*Every mouth which hath not kissed him.* See Hos. 13.2.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *A juniper-tree.* This is a species of broom called *Retama roetam* by modern botanists, a shrub that is occasionally found in the wilderness of Judah and is quite abundant in the region of the Dead Sea and in the Sinaitic peninsula. It attains a height of ten or twelve feet. Besides affording shade it is used for fuel (Ps. 120.4), and its roots can be eaten (Job 30.3, 4). Dr. Robinson in writing about his travels says: Our Arabs always selected the place of encampment in a spot where the juniper-tree grew, in order to be sheltered by it at night from the wind, and when they went on during the day in advance of our camels, we generally found them sitting or sleeping under the bush as a protection from the sun.

6. *A cake baken on the coals.* Dough was baked by being placed on a stone and covered with hot ashes.

13. *Wrapped his face in his mantle.* A sign of reverence. So Moses at the burning-bush "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

18. *Every mouth that hath not kissed him.* So kissing the image of Baal was an act of worship (1 K. 19.18), much as Romanists now kiss the Pope's toe, or the toe of the bronze image of Jupiter which does duty for St. Peter in the church of St. Peter's at Rome, to signify his superiority over any temporal sovereign whose hand is kissed. *H. B. Tristram,* in *Eastern Customs.*

The Mohammedans, on beginning their prayers, bring their thumbs together, kissing them three times. They cannot kiss the hand of the unseen God in token of lowly submission, so kiss their own hand instead. In this sense we must understand the passage: A heathen, seeing an image of Serapis, raised his hand to his mouth, and pressed a kiss on it with his lips. *Henry A. Harper,* in *The Bible and Modern Discoveries.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When Samuel was mourning over the fact that King Saul had failed in his loyalty to the word of the Lord, what did God tell Samuel to do? How did Jonathan prove that there was no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few? How did one of the Judges prove the same fact? How did Samuel act when he found himself superseded, his work forgotten? What did he say about still praying for his people?

Elijah's Flight to Horeb. From Mount Carmel Ahab returned to Jezreel and told Jezebel all that Elijah had done on the mountain and how he had slain the prophets of Baal. The angry queen dispatched a message to Elijah telling him that the gods might slay her if she did not have him put to death within a day. Elijah fled to Beersheba and then on into the desert. Under the shade of a juniper-tree the exhausted and discouraged prophet rested, and prayed that he might die, for his life was a failure. As during the famine before this, so now, he received proof that God was caring for him. He awakened from sleep and found bread and water awaiting him. Rested and strengthened by the food he continued his journey to Horeb, the mountain where Moses had communed with God.

Elijah's Communion with God. While in a cave on the mountain Elijah was made aware of God's "listening ear and sympathizing heart." "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Should he answer that he had run away from Jezebel? Perhaps he had purposed giving up his commission on the mountain that he thought of as especially "the mount of God," for he answered that he had been full of zeal for God, whom the children of Israel had forsaken, and whose prophets had been slain; that he alone was left and that his life was in danger. "Go forth and stand upon the mountain." And the Lord passed by

in the symbols of his power—a wind that hurled down the rocks, a mighty earthquake and flashing lightning. But the Lord was in none of these: and then came a still small voice. Reverently Elijah wrapped his mantle about his face, and stood at the entrance of the cave. Again came the question, "What doest thou here?" and again the same answer was given. "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus." You have fled from your work; return to it. Victory in my warfare is attained not by force alone but by long-continued effort and by gentler means. Anoint Hazael king over Syria and Jehu king over Israel and Elisha to be your successor; they shall fulfill my decrees. Think not that you alone have remained true to me, for there are seven thousand in Israel who have not worshipped Baal.

The Call of Elisha. Elijah departed and found Elisha plowing. He threw over him his mantle, the symbol of his prophetic gift. Elisha knew its meaning, and desired only to bid his father and mother farewell before following the prophet. This request Elijah granted. After slaying his yoke of oxen for a farewell feast, Elisha followed Elijah, and ministered unto him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Jezreel (see p. 67), in Samaria, Elijah went to Beersheba on the southern frontier of the kingdom of Judah, which was a sanctuary as late as the eighth century, Amos 5.5. It is on the border of the desert and is noted for its wells. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had made their home here.

Beersheba was on the great road between Canaan and Egypt. A day's journey brought Elijah through the Negeb, or the South Land, to the wilderness of Paran, where he rested and then continued his journey to Horeb. Horeb is the general name given to the group of mountains in the southern part of the Sinaitic peninsula which includes solemn Mount Sinai. "Here in the heart of nature's profoundest solitude, amid scenery unsurpassed for wild and stern grandeur, history, tradition, and geography have combined to locate Sinai, the Mount of the Lord, and all those wondrous events enacted round it."

Location of Sinai

Jebel Musa (The Mount of Moses) rises precipitously to a height of 7,363 feet. From the Monastery of St. Catherine on its northern slope three thousand stone steps, which were cut thirteen hundred years ago for the use of pilgrims, lead to the summit. Four hundred feet from the summit is the Chapel of Elijah, "where," writes Dr. E. W. Bishop, "there is a kind of hollow amphitheatre, and it requires no stretch of the imagination to see the weary prophet taking refuge under the superincumbent rocks while all the fury of a mountain thunder storm played round him; and then as it passed by, hushing itself, as a thunder storm always hushes itself, into a vast silence thrice accentuated in that desolate spot, one can see the old hero emerging from under the dripping rocks and listening to the still small voice."

The wilderness of Damascus, v. 15, is the Syrian desert in which Damascus is situated. A few miles from Damascus a synagogue marks the spot where according to tradition Elijah anointed Elisha. Abelmeholah, whence Elisha came, was on the Jordan plain perhaps ten miles south of Bethshan.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The hardest thing a teacher has to face is the demon of discouragement. "I am astonished at your having heard anything praiseworthy of one that here seems to be walking alone," wrote Robert Raikes in 1790 to one who had spoken kindly of his efforts to establish the first Sunday-school in the world. From that day to this, Sunday-school teachers have suffered from discouragement.

Are results slow in coming? Do you go to a mountainside with your cup when it is raining and because you cannot let the rain run off the soil into your cup and then drink the water with gusto, say that the rain has no value for quenching thirst? Rather, you let the rain soak down through the soil and through the sand till it comes to a hard stratum, and run along under-

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ground till it issues from a bubbling spring, and there you put in your cup and drink the purest, sparkling, sweet water.

Our wisdom is to transcend the range of variable and discouraged moods and to share the fellowship of Christ. So shall we gain strength and become the strengtheners of others.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Elijah is utterly discouraged. Do you perhaps think that, aside from the graphic interest of the story, there is no special message here for your pupils, for they can know nothing about despair? Stop and recall your own childhood: does there not come to your mind many a moment when your heart seemed breaking, many a tragedy when you thought the sun would never shine again? There is a vivid picture in my mind of a five year-old lad whom I once found under his juniper-tree. Things had all gone wrong, he had "Nothing to do and nothing to do it with," and in his utter discouragement he had hidden himself away and between his sobs was saying, "Winthrop's very sorry for himself, he is: he's very sorry for himself." Very young children have committed suicide, so complete has been their despair. Help your children to free themselves from this happiness-destroying demon. Teach this truth of Browning's: How soon a smile of God can change the world!

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Last week we left Elijah exultant, triumphant, unconscious of fatigue as he raced before Ahab's chariot to Jezreel. Had he not won the battle for the Lord, had not Jehovah been proved mighty and Baal powerless, had not the Baal worship been overthrown as the people shouted "Jehovah, He is God!" had not the Baal prophets been put to death, without a remonstrance from the cowed king, and had not God sent the rain? But Elijah had not reckoned on Jezebel. Her message came. What was it? Why did she send it? Surely she did not wish to give her victim fair play by forewarning him, for a tigress, as Dr. Maclaren comments, does not give warning of her spring. Perhaps her rage was so great that she simply had to give expression to it in some way at once, and she sent the message without stopping to consider its probable effect. Perhaps she feared the people after all, and in view of their acknowledgment of Jehovah did not dare risk taking Elijah's life at this time, and therefore took this means to put him to flight. Elijah could not brave her fury.

For Older Pupils. Let us recall a few facts from the account of Moses' life, as given in the thirty-second and thirty-third chapters of Exodus. (If you assigned these chapters to your pupils last week, by questions secure from them the following facts.)

The Children of Israel have been worshipping the golden calf, and Moses ascends Mount Horeb to plead with God for their forgiveness. He prays, even, that he may be punished in their stead. His prayer is heard. Then Moses proposes a bold request—that he may behold the Divine glory. This is granted, in a measure. Standing in the cleft of the rock, the divine attributes of mercy, grace and long-suffering are made to pass in mystic review before him.

The analogy between the event in the life of Moses and that in the life of Elijah which is our lesson theme, is striking. Tradition says that it was in the very same cave that Elijah lay hidden when the storm passed by him. The Bible says that they both communed with Jehovah on Mount Horeb. What was the task which both men had undertaken? (To reconcile an apostate people, who had worshipped false gods, with Jehovah.) When had Moses lost courage, and asked that he might die? When had Elijah? When had Moses to flee from royal vengeance? When had Elijah? How had Moses miraculously fed a whole people? How had Elijah himself been miraculously fed? How many days is Moses said to have gone without food on Mount Horeb? When did Elijah go the same number of days without food? Neither prophet had the same end as other men. What was the manner of Moses' departure? Of Elijah's?

But the contrast between the two interviews with Jehovah is striking also. That

between Moses and Jehovah is tender and gracious, merciful, forgiving, and Moses is led to ask one favor after another. That between Elijah and Jehovah is stern and forbidding. So different is the attitude of these two men toward their idolatrous people. Moses is pleading for them: Elijah is accusing them. Moses is ready to sacrifice his life for his erring people; Elijah to sacrifice his for his religion but not for the sinners. Moses loves God and his neighbor; Elijah loves only God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Despondency

Elijah was not Superior to Human Weakness. It has been observed of the holy men of Scripture that their most signal failures took place in those points of character for which they were remarkable in excellence. If there was anything for which Elijah is remarkable, we should say it was superiority to human weakness. He dared to arraign and rebuke his sovereign: like the commander who cuts down the bridges behind him, leaving himself no alternative but death or victory, he taunted his adversaries, the priests of Baal, but at the same time insured himself a terrible end, in case of failure, from his exasperated foes. Now it was this man—so stern, so iron, so independent, so above all human weakness—of whom it is recorded that in his trial-hour he gave way to a fit of petulance and querulous despondency to which there is scarcely found a parallel. *.Dr. F. W. Robertson.*

The Reasons for Elijah's Despondency. Many causes united to throw Elijah into the depths of despair. There was the reaction that inevitably follow moments of great exaltation. Then his nerves were overwrought, his physical nature was at a low ebb. The fifteen mile run to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot had exhausted him. Now he was utterly alone. From a period of intense, exciting activity he had come to one of complete idleness. But the strongest contributing cause lay in his zeal for Jehovah. He was bitterly disappointed. His victory seemed defeat. God's cause would never prosper; he had labored in vain. And with the thought of the defeated cause came the loss of confidence in himself as the champion of that cause. "I am not better than my fathers," he cried, "take away my life."

Other Great Men who have Met this Foe. "How willingly would I exchange places today with the soldiers who sleep on the ground in the Army of the Potomac!" wrote President Lincoln to Mr. Schuyler Colfax, upon receiving news from the army. Lincoln's heart was wrapped up in the cause he was championing, and the outlook was most discouraging.

"I cannot win Scotland, let me die!" exclaimed that indomitable Scottish Reformer, John Knox.

An Old Story. Have you heard the fable which tells how the devil once offered his tools for sale intending to give up his business, and displayed there malice, hatred, jealousy, deceit, etc.—with prices affixed? One was laid apart marked with a higher price. When asked about this one he said that was his most useful tool called "depression," for with that he could do anything with people. There is a truth underlying the old story.

One who Refused to be Discouraged. When Henry Martyn was criticized by the English people in Dinapore, a city many miles up the Ganges, where he was laboring as a missionary and was hated by the natives for whose sake he was giving his life, he said: "Let me labor for fifty years, amidst scorn and without seeing one soul converted, still it shall not be worse for my soul in eternity, nor even worse for it in time. Though the heathen rage and the English people imagine a vain thing, the Lord Jesus who controls all events is my friend, my Master, my God, my All. On this Rock of Ages, on which I feel my foot to rest, my head is lifted up above mine enemies round about me, and I sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."

The Only One who was never Despondent. There has only been one Man in all the world's history to whom applies Isaiah's word—He will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set justice in the earth. If there ever was one who seemingly had reason for abject despair it was Jesus the Christ, but his spirit knew not despair.

II Be Still, and Know that I am God

Elijah's Lesson. This scene at Horeb means that Elijah was in a mood when only the highest and most spiritual revelation of God could appeal to him. In our hours of anguish and despair Nature seems overwhelming or indifferent. We need at such seasons some human message, some word of understanding and love. Elijah found it in the voice of gentleness that followed the awful storm with a melting tenderness akin to a mother's voice. After the fire, from which he shrank, came a still small voice that made him realize what Moses and Jacob and many another since has found in the wilderness. "Surely God was in this place and I knew it not." *Rev. Frank Johnson.*

The Lesson for Today concerning the Growth of the Kingdom. "Be still and know that I am God." What a message for the age in which we live! How useless it seems to bid the men of this eager, throbbing generation "be still." It is like telling the restless youth, so full of life, of health and of hope, to sit aside by himself and think. We are confronted with the fact that the characteristics of modern society in many cases produce not only a tendency to self-reliance and self-assertion but a feverish propensity to judge everything by its show and visible results. In other words, they produce what the author of that recent book, "The Renascence of Faith," has called the habit of "practical atheism," or "that habit of mind and way of life in which God counts for nothing." Now it is the recognition of this which gives force to the Psalmist's words today, "Be still and know that I am God." "Be still" and learn that God is working with far mightier forces than you or I can ever hope to wield in our own strength, and those ideals which are ours today and those problems which have yet to be solved are God's ideals and God's problems, and he is incomparably more anxious to bring in the Kingdom of his Son upon this earth than anyone of us ever was or is or can be.

As some one has said, "Those who are to solve these problems are to be intimate with the Master himself." And what will that intimacy teach us? We shall witness a life fired with a passion for the Kingdom of God, and withal so calm and so peaceful that not all the efforts of his enemies were ever able to break that calm or disturb that peace. But we shall not wonder at that when we learn another fact. For Christ, the end was never uncertain. In the darkest hour, when the kingdom seemed most remote, he was able to face the future unflinchingly, and nothing could ever persuade him that the governing idea of his life was a failure or mistake. How do we explain it? The beloved disciple can only offer one explanation: "He was in the bosom of the Father." It was a life of prayer and dependence on God, so that at the last he could pray, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee" and in those words we find the secret of his unbroken calm and unshaken hope. As he learned the secret so may we learn it, and as his Spirit is our spirit so will his triumph be our triumph. *Condensed* from a *Lecture by Ronald W. Allen.*

III Epiphanies

Elijah's Meeting with God. There is nothing unreal about it. It is in Elijah's character, and the securing of it belongs to the desert mountains. The prophet's own soul, inspired by the God within him, shaped it in his imagination. *Stopford A. Brooke,* in *The Old Testament and Modern Life.*

A Succession of Epiphanies. The Bible may be characterized as a succession of epiphanies—that is, manifestations of God on earth. He appears in clearer and clearer visions, and in more and more spiritual visions, at first in dreams, then in human guise as the angel of the Lord, later as an inward experience interpreted by the human voice. All these epiphanies, these manifestations of God to men lead up to the great Epiphany, the great manifestation, the coming of God to dwell with man in human form—himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. *Dr. Lyman Abbott.*

An Apache's Sight of God. The Rev. John N. Steele met a beautiful soul among the Apaches in Arizona. He had journeyed a hundred miles to visit a camp there, and gives this experience.

A man came and knelt by me. Let me give you as nearly as I can his exact words: "I never heard of your God before. If he is as you say, I

could die for a God like that. While you talked I could see him." Eagerly I asked him what he saw. His reply was: "Your God was like the great river full of water, and I was like the ditch that goes to the river. The water flows into the ditch and everything begins to grow and bring fruit." My eyes were moist as I whispered to him: "The rivers of God are full of water." None of us knew that the angel of death stood near, but in three weeks the man had gone to the God for whom he could gladly die; and my heart was very full as I asked myself the question: "Does it pay? Pay to help one such man over to Jesus, our Lord!"

To whom God Reveals Himself. The note of the nightingale is never heard outside the borders of a certain area. You never hear it north of York. You never hear it west of the river Exe. You may take the eggs and have them hatched in Scotland and carry the fledgling to our Scottish woods, but never will the birds come north again to give us that wonderful music of the night. Outside a certain limit they are silent, and outside a certain limit God is silent. There are frontiers for the voice of heaven, as there are for the voice of every singing bird. Only the frontiers are not geographical: they are moral, and have to do with the character. They are determined by what a man desires and by the deepest craving of his soul. The poorest peasant may know more of God than he who is a master of the sciences. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall SEE him. *G. H. Morrison,* in *The Afterglow of God.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Our Prayer: Keep us, O our Saviour, from yielding to despondency. It is not a little thing, but a great wrong, to be gloomy and moody and despondent, and may our presence bring cheer, not gloom, to those about us. Thou, O Christ, art the only One who never broke down under burdens and discouragements; and we recall thy prayerfulness, thy constant communing with the Father. Infinitely more do we need God's peace in our souls, to keep us from breaking under the strain and stress of life. Comfort all who are weary, encourage the discouraged.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Seeing God. See the Third Topic, and Dr. Abbott's Lecture to Unknown Friends, p. 15 of *The Outlook*, January 3, 1914; "The One Thing Needful", *Outlook*, August 9, 1913.

2. The Demon of Discouragement. See the First Topic, and a Sermon by Dr. Hugh Black entitled "Discouraged Youth" in the *Christian Herald* for December 17, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was Ben-hadad's first demand, and what was Ahab's reply? (Verses 1-4.) 2. What was the Syrian king's second demand, and to this what answer did Ahab send? (Verses 5-9.) 3. What is the meaning of the words, "The gods do so unto me, and more so"? (*Guide,* p. 369.) 4. What does Prov. 27.1 say about boasting? 5. What did Paul say in his second letter to Timothy, 4.6-8, about what he had done, and why was he not boasting? 6. How large was "this great multitude"? (Vv. 25-30.) 7. What later battles did Ahab wage with Ben-hadad? (1 K. 20.22-43; 22.1-40.) 8. How did Ahab meet his death? (1 K. 22.) 9. Tell the story of Curtius. (*Guide,* p. 371.) 10. Tell how Hefferon lost the Marathon race. (*Guide,* p. 371.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What did Ben-hadad mean by his boast? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 370.) 2. What did Ahab mean by his retort? 3. What were the "pavilions"? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 368.) 4. Why was noon chosen as the time for attack? (*Guide,* p. 369.) 5. What are the young men in the Student Volunteer Movement doing? 6. What can the young men of our Sunday-school do for our school and church? 7. What can you do?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Prov. 27.1. In your Life of Elijah write Part V, Elijah's Flight and Return. Add a contrast between Elijah the Discourageable and Paul the Undiscourageable.

DEFEAT THROUGH DRUNKENNESS (Temperance Lesson)

Golden Text

Wine and new wine take away the understanding. Hosea 4.11

LESSON I Kings 20.1-21: verses 10-21 printed
MEMORIZE verses 11,12

10 And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. 11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on *his armor* boast himself as he that putteth it off. 12 And it came to pass, when *Ben-hadad* heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set *yourselves in array.* And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

13 And, behold, a prophet came near unto Ahab king of Israel, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thy hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah. 14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith Jehovah, By the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall begin the battle? And he answered, Thou. 15 Then he mustered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he mustered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. 17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out from Samaria. And he said, Whether they come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they come out for war, take them alive. 19 So these went out of the city, the young men of the princes of the provinces, and the army which followed them. 20 And they slew every one his man; and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

10. *The gods do so unto me and more so.* See p. 369.—*If the dust of Samaria shall suffice.*

Boast not thyself of tomorrow;
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Prov. 27.1.

12. *As he was drinking, he and the kings.* Confident of victory, Ben-hadad was giving a banquet to the princes with him, verse 1.—*Pavilions.* Or, *huts,* RVm. The temporary booths. Our word *pavilion* is derived from the Latin *papilio,* butterfly, because of the fancied resemblance between a pitched tent and a butterfly with outstretched wings.—*Set yourselves in array.* Or, *place the engines,* RVm. In order to make ready for the attack.

13. *A prophet..* We have no further knowledge about him.—*All this great multitude.* No fewer than one hundred and twenty-seven thousand, verses 25-30.—*Thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.* In this declaration we have specified the purpose of the entire narrative, and at the same time the standpoint from which it is to be comprehended. The attack of the Syrian king, who had grown so mighty, threatened Ahab and his kingdom with destruction; at this crisis God, who never forsakes his people, repeatedly granted them the victory, which was so extraordinary and wonderful, that it could not possibly be ascribed to human power and strength, but only to God. It was designed to make king and people unmistakably certain that it was not Baal nor any other god, but the God Jehovah who "doeth wonders, and declareth his

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Monument on Princeton College Campus (See page 373)

strength among his people, and redeemeth his people with a strong arm" (*Karl Bahr*).

14. *The young men of the princes of the provinces.* "Servants of the Israelite chiefs who had been driven by the Syrian invasion from the provinces into the capital." "These two hundred and thirty-two governors' armor-bearers were comparatively a far more feeble force than Gideon's three hundred. The answer is practically a bidding to trust wholly in God, whose gift of success should be conditional on an act of faith" (*Wood*).—*Order.* Rather, Begin.

15. *Seven thousand.* "It was to be made clear that this was a victory due to the intervention of God, and not won by the power nor the might of man" (*Farrar*). By the number is meant, no doubt, only the garrison of Samaria.

16. *At noon.* The besiegers would be resting in the heat of the day.—*Was drinking himself drunk.* Compare Belshazzar's use of a similar time, Dan. 5.1. "Drinking makes thinking impossible: some day thinking will make drinking impossible" (*Scottish Reformer*).

18. *Take them alive.* Ben-hadad doubted not that they could be taken without fighting.

20. *The Syrians fled.* At the first attack.—*On a horse with horsemen.* Or, *with horse and horsemen,* RVm.

21. *The king of Israel went out and smote the horses and chariots.* He and those with him must have pursued upon the horses which their enemy had abandoned in their flight.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

10. *The gods do so unto me, and more so.* It was sometimes customary to slay an animal when a formal oath was taken, and these words, as then repeated, meant that the one uttering them asked to have the same fate as the victim if he failed to keep his oath.

16. *Was drinking himself drunk.* While it is true that the oriental nations, especially the Moslems, as a rule are more temperate than the Western nations, yet it is a melancholy fact that intemperance appears to be on the increase in Eastern lands. Although the strict Moslem population drink no wine, that being considered a Christian drink, yet, unfortunately, there is a "raging strong drink" ready at hand for those who wish to indulge a depraved appetite, and it is not generally regarded as prohibited to Christian, Jew, or Moslem. It is an exceedingly intoxicating liquor called *raki,* or *mastika,* probably the same as the *sikera,* or "strong drink" of the Old Testament. This is the drink universally used for intoxicating purposes. It is not a very uncommon sight to see a mixed company of Christians, Jews, and Moslems of the baser sort, assembled in a liquor shop, and indulging together in this dangerous drink, which is regarded as permitted to all. They pass through all the regular stages of intoxication, first noisy hilarity; then maudlin protestations of brotherhood in spite of difference in religion; then an accidental spark kindles the fire of fanaticism, glasses are smashed, heads broken, knives are drawn, with the usual results.

Assyrian Drinking Scene

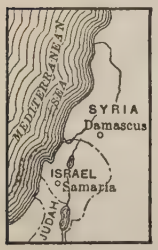
The Greeks tell a story of a certain monk who was tempted by the Devil with the proposition to commit one or two deadly sins, or, as an alternative, to get drunk. The monk thought it over, and concluded that getting drunk would be

the least of the three sins. He accordingly indulged freely in liquor, and on recovering from his debauch, was horrified to learn that while drunk, he had committed also the other two crimes. *Dr. Albert L. Long,* in *Sunday-School Times.*

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What instances have we had this Quarter of a young man who felt his responsibility and did not shirk it? In the Second Quarter? In the First Quarter? What young men have we met in our earlier lessons who were bent on serving others? What young men who were bent only on serving themselves? To what boastful words did Rehoboam give utterance on coming to the throne? Were they carried out? What have you learned about Ahab?

Ahab's Statecraft. It was probably after Elijah's flight to Horeb and the subsequent call of Elisha that Ben-hadad, King of Syria, besieged Samaria.



In the story of Elijah we have seen Ahab only as a weak man dominated by the powerful, unscrupulous Jezebel. Like all men, Ahab had more than one side. He was a king who possessed considerable statecraft and military prowess, and he had brought Israel to a high degree of prosperity.

Ben-hadad's Demands. Ben-hadad I was summoned by Asa of Judah to wage war against Baasha of Israel, I K. 15.16-22. The Ben-hadad who now besieged Samaria was Ben-hadad II, the son of the one who complied with Asa's request. He came with thirty-two vassal princes and a great army. He sent word to Ahab that he would raise the siege in return for money and hostages, and to this Ahab agreed. Ben-hadad evidently thought he had not demanded enough from so compliant an enemy, and he next sent word that the city must be surrendered for plunder. After consultation with his elders, Ahab refused this second demand. Ben-hadad sent back a blustering boast, in true oriental style, to the effect that so great was his army that the dust of Samaria after it had fallen, would not suffice to give each of his followers a handful. "Tell him", returned Ahab, "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off." Ben-hadad was drinking in the camp booths when the message was brought him and he ordered his army set in battle array.

Ahab Encouraged. Unto Ahab a prophet came and assured him that God would give him the victory. "By whom?" questioned the discouraged king. "By the young men in attendance upon the princes of the province", replied the prophet. "Who shall begin the battle?" Ahab further questioned. "Thy forces;" the prophet replied. There were two hundred and thirty-two of these young men and seven thousand of all the people. What were they among so many!

Interior of an Assyrian Tent

How the Defeat of the Syrians was Accomplished. The young men made a sally upon the besieged city at noon. Word was brought to Ben-hadad, but he and the princes were drinking themselves drunk, and so sure of success was he that he merely ordered the young men captured alive whether they had come forth to capitulate or to fight. The Israelitish army followed, and the prophet's word was fulfilled; the Syrians fled, Ben-hadad barely made his escape, and with their abandoned horses and chariots Ahab and his troops pursued them with great slaughter.

Later Battles between Ahab and Ben-hadad. Ahab and Ben-hadad met in the siege of Samaria and Ahab was victorious. They met the next year at Aphek, above the sea of Galilee on Syrian soil, and Ahab was again victorious. Ahab allowed Ben-hadad to escape on his promise to restore certain cities which

his father had taken from Ahab's father, and Ahab was sternly censured for his leniency by one of the prophets. (Probably his leniency was due to the threatening attitude of the Assyrians at this time. The Book of Kings does not record this, but we know from the Assyrian inscriptions that Ahab and Ben-hadad both sent forces to the aid of Hamath when it was attacked by Shalmaneser II, and they were defeated in the battle of Karkar, near the Orontes, in 854 B. C.) Ben-hadad kept the city of Ramoth, in Gilead, probably one of the cities he had agreed to restore, and Ahab with the aid of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, attempted to regain it. Ahab met his death in the battle. His body was brought back to Samaria for burial, and the washing of his blood from his chariot by the entrance of the gateway was regarded as a fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy, 1 K. 21.19.

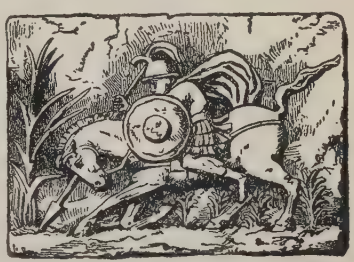
Samaria had been made the capital of Israel by Omri.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

God saved Israel that day by means of the young men. Teachers of young men have today a great opportunity. The Second Topic is yours. Arouse in your young men a realization of their capacities and advantages, opportunities and responsibilities. Inspire them with the determination to make the most of these in the service for others. Get them to see what definite things await their doing, and to agree upon a beginning.

SUGGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Begin your talk with the fable of Curtius and the gulf in the Roman Forum, p. 373. It is a rule, you know, that the details of an illustration should be in inverse proportion to the culture of the hearers. An illustration which is sufficient for nimble, educated adult minds, would be lost on children. Children need to be impressed by having the story expanded into detailed description. Expand the fable of Curtius, giving the words of the people, the words of Curtius, and what was said about him after his heroic deed. Tell your pupils that this is only a story of "Once upon a time" but it has a meaning. Explain it. Then tell them that you have a true story for them of what happened long ago in the kingdom of Israel, which shows what young men can do with God's help. Picture the two scenes; in the besieged city and in the camp of the enemy outside. After you have told the story, or have had your pupils tell it, talk about the Golden Text.



Curtius

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Is it easy to begin a contest well? Is it easy to end it well? If you have entered for a long race, what is it that you must fear will keep you from winning? A champion tennis-player has written a book on how to play that game and among the things that make for success is one which he calls "morale." He explains that term thus: "Morale implies, roughly speaking, the power of endurance when there is every external reason for not enduring." "Morale" is assuredly a prime factor in any contest. You may begin well, but if you have it not you will not end well. Is it ever sensible before a contest to boast that you will win? Did you ever hear another say, You crowed too soon?

There was a great king of Syria who was so confident of success in battle that he made a most extravagant boast. Who was the king and what was his boast?

For Older Pupils. In one of the great Marathon races a South African runner, Hefferon, came out second. He explained afterwards why he lost the race: "My misfortunes happened near home, two miles from which, to my

great regret, I accepted a draught of champagne. It was a great mistake. I got a cramp a mile from the finish, and then lost my head."

"Two miles—and then the goal is won! Oh, surely there can rise
No evil chance in two short miles to snatch away the prize!
Will strength give way that holds thus far? Will such strong courage fall?
Ah, no. But in a race like this, are strength and courage all?
There is temptation still to face—of all our foes the worst—
And see, the leader turns aside to slake his burning thirst.
He checks his pace thus near the goal; he takes the proffered wine:
Ah, those who drink a draught like that, the laurelled prize resign.
His limbs grow stiff. Yet on he toils, to hear with glance of dread
A rival's footsteps close behind: they reach him—pass ahead.
In sight of home! But all in vain! The cheers of welcome rise
When feet unchecked as his are checked, speed on to win the prize."

Three thousand years earlier, in round numbers, a Syrian king was "on the home stretch." He had nearly won a great victory when he turned aside from the goal in view to slake his thirst in the noonday heat. He, too, lost his head completely. It was a great mistake.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Let not him that girdeth on his armor Boast himself as he that putteth it off

Singing of Triumph before the Victory. You remember how the people came to Rehoboam on his succession to the throne of Solomon his father and asked to have their burdens lightened. Rehoboam was just girding on his armor, but he was as confident as though he were taking it off, the battle won. With arrogant words he told the people how he would increase their burdens, but the ten northern tribes rebelled and he lost the greater part of his kingdom.

Ben-hadad, king of Syria, was so overconfident that he made a most extravagant boast: "The dust of Samaria shall not suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me." He saw the beautiful capital in ruins, and his victorious army in possession. "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off," warned King Ahab. Samaria was not yet a heap of rubbish. So sure was Ben-hadad of success that he and his allies spent their time in drunken revelry. The Syrians were put to flight with great slaughter, and the king barely escaped with his life.

Red Cloud was an able Indian chief. On one occasion a number of men came from Washington to make a treaty with him. One of them was a great braggart, and he made a long speech in which he used big words, and promised great things that he and the government would do for the Indians if they agreed to the terms of the treaty. Red Cloud listened in silence, and when the speech was over he arose and uttered his sentiments in one contemptuous sentence: "Heap big wind, much dust, no rain." His words might be applied to Ben-hadad's blustering threat.

Sing not of triumph before victory, says the Latin proverb: Do not sell the bear's skin before you have the bear, says the German: Praise a fair day at night, says the English. It is only when the contest is over that victory is assured.

In the Battle of Life. Life is meant to be one long conflict. If there once has dawned upon a young soul the whole majestic sweep of possibilities in its opening life, then the battle assumes an aspect of solemnity and greatness that silences all boasting.

There is no room for boasting, but there is room for absolute confidence. You, young men and women, standing at the entrance of the amphitheatre where the gladiators fight, may dash into the arena with the most perfect confidence that you will come out with your shield preserved and your sword unbroken.

There is one way of doing it. "Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world." That is not the boast of a man putting on the harness, but the calm utterance of the conquering Christ when he was putting it off. He has con-

quered that you may conquer. Distrust yourselves utterly, and trust Jesus Christ absolutely, and give yourselves to him, to be his servants and soldiers till your lives' end. He was no self-righteous braggart, but a very rigid judge of himself, who, close by the headsman's block that ended his life, said: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." "Put on the whole armor of God", and when the time comes to put it off, you will have a peaceful assurance as far removed from despair as it is from boasting. *Condensed* from a chapter in *The Secret Power,* by *Dr. Alexander Maclaren.*

II By the Young Men

The Story of Curtius. You all know the classic story of Curtius. In the middle of the Roman Forum there suddenly appeared a terrible chasm. So deep was it that the bottom could not be seen, and no amount of work spent in trying to fill it up made any impression. In despair the people consulted their priests and were told that the gulf would close when the most precious thing in Rome was cast into its depths. They flung in their gold and silver and jewels, but the chasm yawned as wide as ever. At last a young man named Curtius said that Rome's most precious possession was her heroes, and clad in full armor, he rode into the Forum, put spurs to his horse, and leaped into the abyss. The sacrifice was accepted, and the gulf closed after him.

The fable teaches two truths. More precious than gold or silver are the youth of the land, and it is the youth upon whom the prosperity of the nation depends.

By the Young Men of the Student Volunteer Association. "It is a holy sight to see a nation saved by its youth", observed Dr. John R. Mott in an address, "but it is a grander sight to see the Christian students of a continent combined to save the world. We are living in the most dangerous time in the history of the world. The shrinkage of the world's distances has brought nation to react on nation as never before, and Christianity can save the day."

On the grounds of Princeton University a statue commemorates the beginnings of student Christian work. See our reproduction facing this lesson. It represents a college man in football togs, with face uplifted in token of the spiritual transformation wrought in the student life by the Christian Association and Student Volunteer movements. This is the inscription:—

To mark the birthplace of the world-wide union of Christian students in work for Christ—1876. Nearby in Old East College some words of William E. Dodge, Jr., led a little group of students to form the International Young Men's Christian Association from which the Student Volunteer Movement and the World's Student Christian Federation have grown. For a nobler, stronger manhood in body, soul, and spirit, for the better service of mankind and the coming of God's kingdom, the Christian students of the world are united in brotherhood in the name of Christ.

Dynamic Words to a Young Men's Club. The waters of Niagara have thundered for centuries, but only to wear away the hidden rocks, until the genius of modern industry organized their latent forces into dynamos for social uses,—then power burst into beauty in the illuminated buildings and fountains of the Exposition, and into service for the cities which has advanced the prosperity of Buffalo by leaps and bounds. More than anything else the church of today needs to harness the splendid strength of young manhood to her tremendous social and moral tasks; more than anything else the young men of today need to charge their lives with the spiritual dynamic of the church.

The church is the spiritual dynamo of society, wrapping hundreds of lives into a mighty magnet to intensify the divine power in human life, and every man in close connection with the church is a live wire for human good.

So my message is just this, young man, hitch up to this spiritual dynamo, and be a real live wire. Make close connection. Get into the heart of things. Receive the full charge and send it on. Don't be a "dead one." Here is a strand of many threads, but only hanging by a single thread to the church—of course the power stops. Connect them all up, threads of giving, praying,

serving, and screw the cap of consecration down for keeps. Another dead one is the leaky wire, poorly insulated from wrong contacts, losing by touch with a hundred distracting interests the power it should conduct straight from the dynamo to one chosen point of contact of specific good. And how many points of contact there are, waiting for you to hitch up. First there is the church itself. It needs to be socialized and democratized. You can help to create a social atmosphere, and to open the pews and even the official places of the church to all men alike, irrespective of the artificial and unjust distinctions of society. You can help the church to study its own community, define its task, and start things for neighborhood welfare. Every church has some things which it can do for its community better than any other organization can do.

Then there are numbers of philanthropic and reformatory societies, most of them languishing for the lack of a few live wires to charge them with the inspiration which no man can bring them save those who possess the spiritual quality of manhood. Find one to your liking and get into its work.

Last and best of all—be a live wire right where you are. Have you social engagements? Put the spiritual quality into your social influence. Are you in business? Make your business a profession, devoted to the high task of solving the commercial or industrial problems tied up with your business. Are you at work? Stand not upon your rights alone, but for the rights of all men, rich or poor, employer or employé. Are you a citizen of the best commonwealth time has seen? Then be a real citizen and pour into caucus, polls and party the spiritual quality with which every true citizen of the Kingdom of God is charged. This is my recommendation: Close up connection with the spiritual dynamo, find your point of contact, and be a live wire for human good and common brotherhood. *Edward Holyoke,* in *The Clarion.*

A Young Man's Prayer. Wilbur Kirkland Bates was only seventeen years old when he wrote the following stanza. No one who reads it will wonder that a schoolmate said of his last year on earth, "It was a beautiful year that benefited all who knew him."

O God, give to me, first, a heart full of love,
And the power to act it out,
And an implicit faith in the good that there is—
To believe and not to doubt,
A deep calm like the blue, unruffled sea,
And a purpose high as heaven,
As pure as the stars that shine within
The galaxy at even;
A heart made to suffer at all wrong,
A clear head my heart to fulfil,
A cool hand at the bidding of my head,
And behind the hand, a *Will!*

III Wine and New Wine Take away the Understanding

Advice which Ben-hadad Needed. To the man who is actively engaged in responsible work, who must have at his command the best that is in him, at its best—to him I would, with all the emphasis that I possess, advise and urge, "Leave drink alone—absolutely." *William H. Taft.*

An Adage from the Orient.

At the punch-bowl's brink,
Let the thirsty think
What they say in Japan:
"First the man takes a drink,
Then the drink takes a drink,
Then the drink takes the man!"

Edward Rowland Sill.

The "Wine Mess" Barred from our Navy. For years the use of liquors has been prohibited on our naval vessels except by commissioned and warrant officers. They had their "wine mess". Upon recommendation of Surgeon-General Braisted, a new order (at this writing) has just been issued

by Secretary Daniels and countersigned by President Wilson which says: "The use or introduction for drinking purposes of alcoholic liquors on board any naval vessels, or within any navy yard or station, is strictly prohibited, and commanding officers will be held directly responsible for the enforcement of this order."

The reason which Secretary Daniels gives for the issuing of this order might be condensed into the words of our Golden Text. He says: "The saddest hour in my official life is when an officer or enlisted man must be punished for intoxication. During the last week it has been my painful duty to approve a court martial for dismissal from the service of an officer for intoxication. He told me that he had never tasted intoxicating drink until he did so in the wine mess on his cruises. Others who have been disciplined for drinking to excess have made similar statements to me. Officers are now commissioned at the early age of twenty-two years. Has the government a right to permit this temptation which too often destroys the highest usefulness of young officers? I think not. If there is one profession more than any other that calls for a clear head and a steady hand it is the naval profession. Experience has shown the wisdom of having no intoxicants on our ships for the young men who enlist. I believe experience has demonstrated that a uniform rule should prevail in the navy for all who enlist in the service, from the highest rank to the youngest enlisted man or officer who comes into the service, and that the abolition of the wine mess will be justified."

Indirect Teaching. The Austrian Government does not permit a teacher to give instruction concerning the evils of alcohol. An Austrian teacher described at the Vienna Anti-Alcohol Congress how he accomplishes his purpose. "In the arithmetic class I gave an example. 'The father spends thirty kreuzer a day for intoxicants. How much does that amount to in so many months, years, etc.? In course of how long a time could he with this money make himself independent?' It was eight days before we got through with reckoning on this example. The effect was so strong that the children wanted to throw stones into a saloon opposite. Yet I had not spoken a word against alcohol the whole time."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and determine with Divine help to use your strength and energy and enthusiasm in righteous causes.

There is an Arabic word—*muaththarin*—which means "those who have been made to stumble." In Syria a drunkard or brawler or a criminal is called by this name, and thus the blame is thrown upon those who have failed to remove the stumbling-block in their way. There are multitudes who are drinking themselves drunk in our land. Can the blame be laid at our doors?

Our Prayer: We thank thee, O God, for thy gifts of youth and health and strength and energy, and we dedicate them to thy service. Show us specific ways in which we can use them for thee. Make us zealous and steadfast in Christian service. Keep from our lips the intoxicating drink which would rob us of these gifts, and help us to take away from others all opportunities for drinking themselves drunk and making themselves worse than useless in the battles of life. We ask it in the name of him who, though tempted, never yielded to temptation.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Golden Text. The Manager of the West Steel Foundry Company of Cleveland believes that there should be a prohibitive zone around industrial plants just as around schools and churches. See his article in *The Survey*, Dec. 20, 1913; also what lawyers say about the Liquor Traffic, *Sunday School Times*, Feb. 2, 1914.

2. What the young men can do for our land today.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Note-Book Work. In your Book of the Kings of Israel continue your Life of Ahab by writing an account of his war with Ben-hadad.

Assign whatever work is necessary for the review of next week.

LESSON XIII—SEPTEMBER 26

REVIEW—OBEDIENCE AND KINGSHIP

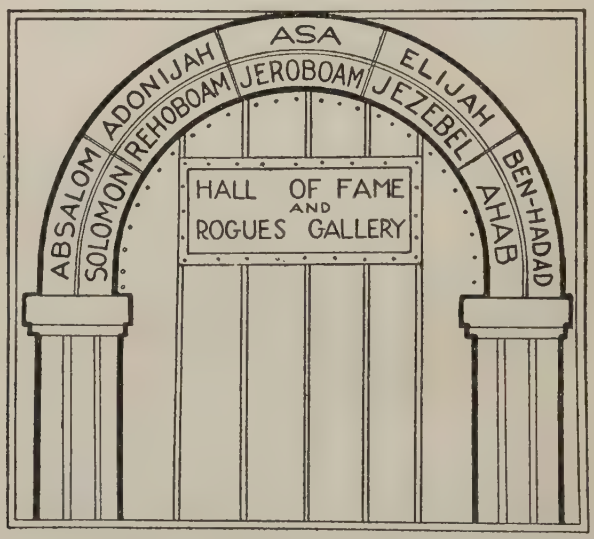
Golden Text

The king shall joy in thy strength, O Jehovah;
And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Psalm 21.1

READ Psalm 72

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

Have the diagram below drawn upon the blackboard with the names omitted from the arch. Upon the other end of the board write the headings, "Chief Persons", "Chief Facts", and by questions secure the answers below, writing them after they have been given. After the two columns have been filled, ask for names to write upon the door of the "Hall of Fame and Rogues' Gallery", and call for the reasons which entitle each name to a place there.



Chief Persons	Chief Facts
I. David, Joab, Abishai, Absalom.	A Great Failure.
II. David, Bathsheba, Zadok, Nathan, Solomon, Adonijah.	A Great Occasion.
III. Solomon.	A Great Choice.
IV. Solomon, the People.	A Great Prayer.
V. Solomon, Queen of Sheba.	A Great Wisdom.
VI. Rehoboam, Old Men, Young Men, Israelites.	A Great Division.
VII. Jeroboam.	A Great Sin.
VIII. Azariah, Asa.	A Great Reform.
IX. Elijah, Ahab, Woman of Zarephath	A Great Provider.
X. Elijah, Prophets of Baal.	A Great Test.
XI. Elijah, Jehovah.	A Great Lesson.
XII. Benhadad, Ahab, Young Men.	A Great Defeat.

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Before class time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each circle should be covered by a piece of paper attached at the

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
The king shall joy in thy strength, O Jehovah; And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! PSALM 21.1
DRAW NIGH TO GOD
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
XII

top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

If you have drawn a picture each week, as suggested, your pupils will enjoy them and the talks about them all the more because they are familiar.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Lesson I. There is a low-spreading tree, and in the fork of its branches a young man is caught by his head. Over here a group of men are talking excitedly. Now some of them are rushing toward the young man held in the tree's grip. Who is the young man? How did he happen to be in the forest? Who are the men that are so excited? Are they hurrying to save the young man? What are they going to do? Why? Who grieved for him? Did he deserve to be killed?

Lesson II. An aged man is dying on his couch. He is talking to a woman. Two men now enter, and the old man tells them to do something. Next I see a procession, trumpets are blowing, people are shouting as if they were happy. At the head of the procession there rides a young man upon a mule. Who is the old man? With whom was he talking? What was he telling them to do? Who is the young man at the head of the procession? Why are the people so happy?

Lesson III. A young man is sleeping and dreaming. Now he awakens, looking very thoughtful. Next I see him standing before the ark and offering sacrifices. Who is he? What was his dream? What is the great choice that he made? How was his choice approved?

Lesson IV. A man is standing before the altar in a beautiful Temple with his hands extended as a minister extends his when he closes the church service with the benediction. He is offering a prayer. Who is the man? Where was the Temple? What is he saying?

Lesson V. Many camels heavily laden, I see approaching a great city. A lady is riding in a strange looking box carried by one of the camels. Who is she? To what city is she going? Whom is she going to see? Why? What is she bringing him? What did she think about him after she saw him?

Lesson VI. A young man is talking with old men. He turns away from them with an angry frown upon his face. Now young men are eagerly talking to him and he looks pleased with what they say. Who is the young man? Who are the old men? What are they telling him? Why is he angry? What do the young men tell him? Why is he pleased? What did the people say when he told them what the young men advised him to say? Into what two kingdoms was Solomon's kingdom then divided?

Lesson VII. There is an image here of a calf, made out of gold, and people are bowing down before it. Here is another place where there is the same sort of image. Who had these two calves of gold made? Where did he put them? Why did he not want his people to go to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple there?

Lesson VIII. A king is watching his men destroy many idols. Now he is having an altar repaired, and is offering sacrifices. This is one of the good kings of Judah: what is his name? Why did he destroy the idols?

Lesson IX. I see a brook, the sides are steep and full of caves. There are many ravens flying about, and now I see a man all alone. In the next scene a woman is baking something on hot coals, a little boy is standing by her, and the man I saw before is waiting near. Who is the man? Where was he in the first scene? How was he fed? Where was he in the second scene? What did he ask the woman to do? Was she rich or poor? What happened to her scanty store? Who was taking care of Elijah all this time?

Lesson X. A man is building something with twelve stones. Now he is digging a trench around it. He puts wood on top and pours water upon it all. Who is the man? What was he building? Why did he pour on water? What happened? What did the people then believe?

Lesson XI. I see a man upon a mountain. I hear him say, "I have been very jealous for Jehovah". There is a terrific wind blowing. The earth now is quaking. Lightning is flashing. And now there is the murmur of a gentle voice. Who is the man? Where was he? Why was he discouraged? What lesson did God teach him?

Lesson XII. There are many kings in this picture. They are in a large tent and they are eating and drinking. They have drunk so much wine that they do not know anything. Who was the chief king? What did he boast that he was going to do? A prophet told king Ahab that they should all be saved from these Syrians. By whom? What was the result of the battle? How could the young men defeat so many?

QUESTIONS FOR AN ORAL REVIEW

Instead of asking these questions, they may be written one each upon a slip of paper (as many slips for each question as the number of your pupils) and the answer may be written thereon in class. Give out additional slips with new questions as they are called for.

For Younger Pupils.

1. What commandment did Absalom break?
2. Who were the three kings of United Israel?
3. The fourth king lost the greater part of his kingdom: who was he?
4. Into what two parts was the kingdom divided?
5. What city was the capital of the Southern Kingdom?
6. What city was the capital of the Northern Kingdom?
7. Who built Samaria?
8. What young king followed evil advisers?
9. What young king made a wise choice?
10. Who made two calves of gold? Why?
11. What queen praised Solomon?
12. What things made a great impression upon the Queen of Sheba?
13. Who was the king who led his people astray?
14. How did Elijah challenge the prophets of Baal?
15. What happened on Mount Carmel?
16. What queen threatened to kill Elijah?
17. Where did Elijah hide?
18. What happened at Zarephath?
19. Whose wife was Jezebel?
20. What happened to Elijah at Horeb?
21. What were Asa's good acts?
22. What king lost his army through drunkenness?
23. Who won the victory over him?
24. "It is like the widow's cruse": what does the expression mean?
25. "The half was never told": how did this saying arise?
26. Who were the two leading heroes of the First Book of Kings?
27. Draw a map of Palestine and locate the places mentioned in the Quarter's lessons.

For Older Pupils.

1. Why were places of worship established in Northern Israel separate from that of Judah?
2. What Psalms do we especially think of as having been written by David, and why?
3. How did the northern and southern tribes of Israel long show their lack of unity?
4. What happened upon Solomon's death, and why?
5. What man believed in "the divine right of kings", and what befell him?
6. What was the size, strength, and weakness of each kingdom?
7. Tell about the religious reforms of a good king of Judah.
8. When and how was Elijah the champion of pure religion?
9. Give a practical lesson that you have learned from each lesson.
10. What did David do for his people?
11. What did Solomon do for his people?
12. Repeat Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple.
13. What was the "epitaph" of Jeroboam?
14. How did Elijah prove himself a champion of God?
15. Where and how was Elijah cared for during the drought?
16. What test did Elijah propose to Ahab and for what purpose, and how did it end?

17. What is the difference between the sin of Jeroboam in making golden calves and that of Ahab in leading the people to worship Baal?
18. How do you know that Elijah was a man of prayer? Of trust? Of obedience?
19. What king was an energetic reformer?
20. For what is Mount Carmel famed?
21. How did Solomon regard his office?

A SENTENCE REVIEW

Fill the blanks in these sentences and tell who spoke the words and on what occasion:—

1. As . . . hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with . . .
2. Give thy servant an . . . . . to judge thy people.
3. Behold, . . . and the . . . of heavens cannot . . . thee; how much less this house that I have builded!
4. If thou wilt be a . . . unto this people this day, and wilt . . . them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy . . . for ever.
5. My father did lade you with a heavy . . . I will add to your . . . : my father . . . you with whips, but I will . . . you with . . . .
6. It is too much for you to go to . . . : behold thy . . . O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of . . . .
7. Jehovah is with you, while you are . . . him; and if ye . . . him, he will be . . . of you.
8. For thus saith Jehovah, the . . . of . . . shall not waste, neither shall the . . . of . . . fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth . . . upon the earth.
9. Let it be known this day that thou art . . . in Israel, and that I am thy . . . , and that I have done all these things at thy . . .
10. I have been very . . . for Jehovah, the God of . . . ; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy . . . thrown down thine . . . and slain thy . . . with the sword; and I, even I . . . , am left.
11. Let not him that . . . on his . . . boast himself as he that . . . it off.

QUESTIONS UPON THE TRUTHS OF THE LESSONS

What lesson shows the evils to which a haughty spirit leads?

What great instance of filial disobedience is there in our lessons? In what measure was his father responsible for his failure?

How is the lesson taught that wisdom is better than rubies?

What example of whole-hearted service to God have we had?

How is the evil of despondency portrayed, and what lesson did the discouraged man learn? What was the lesson of the still small voice? To whom does God reveal himself?

How was God's providence shown to Elijah? How is his providence shown to us?

What is wrong about boasting? What can young men do?

How are the long-lasting effects of evil shown?

How may one have help in meeting a great responsibility? What is the best choice that you can make?

What is the lesson of Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal?

What truths about our churches did we learn from Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple?

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOKS

1. From what Books are our Quarter's lessons taken?
2. Who are the chief characters in Second Samuel?
3. Who are the chief characters in First Kings?
4. Where in the Bible will you find the story about Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal?
5. Where will you find Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple?
6. Where will you find the account of the division of the Kingdom?

(For review questions upon the Book of First Kings, see p. 341; upon Second Chronicles, p. 351.)

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW

For Younger Pupils.

1. Tell the story of a king who would not listen to the wise advice of others, and what happened.
2. Tell the story of a great contest.
3. The story of the visit of a Queen to a great King.
4. The dedication of a great Temple.
5. A lesson that the prophet Elijah learned.
6. The story of a disobedient son.
7. Write a letter such as the widow of Zarephath might have written a friend after the visit of Elijah.

For Older Pupils.

1. An account of the causes that led to the division of the Hebrew Kingdom.
2. A connected history of the Kingdom of Israel from Jeroboam to Ahab.
3. A character sketch of Rehoboam and Jeroboam.
4. A parallel between Rehoboam and Charles I.
5. Moses and Elijah on Sinai.
6. David as a father.
7. Contrast Solomon and Elijah, the two leading characters of First Kings, as to their life, their importance to their generation, and their lasting fame.
8. A comparison of Elijah and John the Baptist.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What kind of palace had Ahab built for himself? (1 K. 22.39.) 2. Where was Jezreel? (*Guide*, p. 385.) 3. Why was Naboth so unwilling to sell the vineyard? (*Guide*, p. 382.) 4. What letters from the time of Ahab have been found? (*Guide*, p. 383.) 5. How many witnesses to a crime were required by the law of Deuteronomy? (Dt. 19.15.) 6. Had the charge against Naboth been true would his death have been legal? (Lev. 24.16.) 7. What was the law as to the place of stoning? (Lev. 24.14.) 8. How many of the ten commandments did Ahab and Jezebel break? Repeat them. (10. 9, 8, 6.) 9. Where are the commandments found? (Ex. 20.) 10. Compare Nathan's rebuke of David with Elijah's rebuke of Ahab. 11. What did Jesus say about covetousness? (Lk. 12.15, 21.) 12. What does Micah say about those who "covet fields and seize them"? (Mic. 2.) 13. What did Achan covet, and what was his punishment for seizing it? (Josh. 7.21.) 14. For what did Judas sell himself to do evil? (Mt. 21.15.) 15. How did Ahab meet his death? (1 K. 23.34.38.) 16. How did Jezebel? (2 K. 9.30-37.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What have you learned before this about Ahab's character? 2. What new traits does he show in this lesson? 3. Why did Jezebel seal the letters with Ahab's seal? (*Guide*, p. 383.) 4. Was Ahab responsible for Jezebel's deed? 5. Did he know about her plan? 6. What should he have done when he learned how she had secured the vineyard? 7. Why was he held guilty of Naboth's death, when he could have said, "Thou canst not say I did it"? 8. What was it that prompted Ahab to call Elijah his enemy? 9. Is sin always found out? 10. What does our Golden Text mean? 11. Is it ever right to covet anything? 12. Are you covetous? 13. How may covetousness be overcome?

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON I—OCTOBER 3

ELIJAH IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD

Golden Text

Be sure your sin will find you out. Numbers 32.23

LESSON I Kings 21: verses 11-20 printed MEMORIZE verses 17-19

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, according as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. 12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. 13 And the two men, the base fellows, came in and sat before him; and the base fellows bare witness against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did curse God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him to death with stones. 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. 15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive but dead. 16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 And the word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it. 19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *After these things.* See the Historical Background.

2. *I will give thee the worth of it in money.* Omri, Ahab's father, had given Shemer, the owner, two talents of silver for the hill of Samaria, I K. 16.24, and David had paid Araunah (Ornan) six hundred shekels of gold for the threshing-floor of Morah, 1 Ch. 21.22-25.

3. *Jehovah forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my father's unto thee.* The children of Israel shall cleave every one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers, Num. 36.7. See p. 383.

4. *He laid him down upon his bed and would eat no bread.* The bed was perhaps the couch on which he reclined at table. See. p. 387.

7. *I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth.* Compare Samuel's prophecy, I S. 8.14.

8. *The elders and nobles.* "Ahab is wicked and weak; Jezebel, wicked and strong; the elders, wicked and subservient" (*Maclaren*).

9. *Proclaim a fast.* Fasts were proclaimed to avert calamities that impended because of some crime committed. Morever, the fast gave a pretext for a public assemblage at which Naboth would not fail to be present.—*Set Naboth on high among the people.* Or, *at the head of,* RVm. This must have been, not the place of honor, but the place usually given the accused at a trial.

10. *Two men.* Two witnesses were necessary, Dt. 19.15 She would observe the forms of the law, even as the Sanhedrin did in the trial of Jesus.—*Curse.* Or, *renounce,* RVm. See Ex. 23.28.

11. *The elders and the nobles did as Jezebel had sent unto them.* Explained in verses 8-10.—*The letters which she had sent.* Recall the letter which David sent to Joab, ordering the death of Uriah.

ELIJAH REPROVING AHAB AND JEZEBEL

From a Painting by Frank Dicksee

13. *The two men.* See verse 10.—*Naboth did curse God and the king.* Had he been charged with cursing the king alone, he could have been put to death (I K. 2.8), but the other charge gave a pious appearance to their zeal.—*They carried him forth out of the city.* This was according to law, for the city must not be polluted with blood.—*And stoned him to death.* His sons also, 2 K. 9.26: thus no heirs were left to claim the property.

15. *Jezebel said to Ahab.* "How potent a woman's influence is for good or ill; but an evil woman will more quickly debase her husband than a noble woman will uplift him" (*Meyer*).

16. *Jezreel.* See the Geographical Background.—*To take possession of it.* According to the rabbis, the property of one who had cursed the king fell to him by right.

19. *Thou shalt speak unto him.* "As in the most pathetic of Grecian dramas the unjust sentence has no sooner been pronounced on the unfortunate Antigone, than Tiresias rises up to pronounce the curse of the Theban king, so, in this grander than any Grecian tragedy, the well-known prophet is here to utter the doom of the house of Ahab" (*Stanley*).—*Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?* Ahab is held guilty of the murder instigated by Jezebel: see ¶ 2, p. 388. Dr. Maclaren recalls here that the fiery Tishbite was repeated in the lonely ascetic who had his Ahab in Herod, and his Jezebel in Herodias, and flashed out the lightnings of his words on every sin.—*In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood.* Not literally fulfilled in Ahab's case (I K. 21.29; 22.37-38), but fulfilled in Joram's death (2 K. 9.24-26). Compare Sophocles:—

> Go where thou slew'st thy father,
> That in the self-same place thou, too, may'st die.

20. *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* Thus the frightened king gasps as the stern prophet appears in his pathway. So conscience surprises and frightens and condemns. In 18.17 Ahab addressed Elijah as "Thou troubler of Israel."—*Thou hast sold thyself to do evil.* Thou hast sold thyself to no purpose, Septuagint Version.

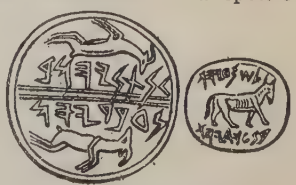
21-23. The words of verse 21 are used in I K. 14.10 and 2 K. 9.8.—*Like the house of Jeroboam.* I K. 15.29.—*Like the house of Baasha.* I K. 16.3-11.—*The dogs shall eat Jezebel.* 2 K. 9.10, 30-37.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *That I may have it for a garden of herbs.* The garden of herbs would be spikenard and saffrons, rosemary and other scented plants, of which Easterners are so fond. *Henry A. Harper.*

8. *She wrote letters.* The excavations carried on in Samaria show that the Israelites had a cheap and easy method of sending written messages. Fragments of earthenware have been unearthed written upon with a reed pen in an ink made of pure carbon or lampblack. Professor Reisner thinks them the earliest specimens of Israelitish work contemporanous with the Bible and that they may have been written on in the time of Ahab.

8. *Sealed them with his seal.* The seal had on it the name or a special design of the king, and this Jezebel rubbed with ink and stamped upon the letters, making them as authoritative as would his own signature.



Ancient Hebrew Seale

15. *The vineyard which he refused to give thee for money.* When the children of Israel entered Canaan, each family was given a portion of the land which was to remain its property forever. If a man was compelled by adverse circumstances to part with his land, it could not be disposed of forever. In the Jubilee year every man was to return to his property. A mortgage could run, at the most, only for a part of forty-nine years. "According to the multitude of the years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years thou shalt diminish the price of it," for it was thus "the harvest" of the ground and not the ground itself which was sold. You recall from the

story of Ruth that when a family was forced to offer land for sale, it was the duty of the kinsman-redeemer to purchase the land. When the daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses and told him that their father had died, leaving no sons, Moses declared that they were then entitled to the same rights as sons. "Let them be married to whom they think best," he ordered; "only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married. So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cleave everyone to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers."

Orientals have always been unwilling to sell inherited property. When Shemer sold the hill of Samaria to Omri for his capital, we are told that "he called the city which he built after the name of Shemer," and orientalists have thought that this must have been Shemer's condition on which he parted with his inheritance, for thus he retained for himself the "remembrance." The Hindus, according to Dr. Clarke, are just as strongly attached to their homesteads as the Jews. Though the heads of the family be employed in a distant part of the country, and though the homesteads may be almost in ruins, they still cling to the family inheritance with a fondness bordering almost on superstition.

23. *The dogs shall eat Jezebel.* The bodies of poor Hindus, and of persons who have received public punishment are thrown into the rivers, and, floating to the side, are devoured by dogs, vultures, and crows.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When had David sent a letter which ordered a murder? To whom? Whom did David order killed? Why? Who courageously rebuked David for this sin? How did he rebuke him? What prophet and judge warned the people that their king would take away their vineyards, and what led him to tell them this? What experiences had Ahab had with Elijah?

Connection of this Lesson with Lesson XI of Last Quarter. Chapters 19 and 21, and Chapters 20 and 22. of First Kings are closely connected in thought, and in the Septuagint Version Chapter 21 is placed immediately after Chapter 19. Chapter 19 was our lesson three weeks ago: recall the story of Elijah's flight and return. Probably some time has passed since Elijah's visit to Horeb, for persecution has ceased. He is no longer afraid of Jezebel; he faces Ahab and denounces her crimes and his.

Ahab's Covetousness and Disappointment, and Jezebel's Plot. Near Ahab's palace in Jezreel was a vineyard which the king coveted and tried to buy, but Naboth, its owner, would not part with his inheritance. The petulant king, so unexpectedly thwarted in his wish, entered the palace, threw himself on his couch and refused to eat. Jezebel, his wife, inquired the cause of his displeasure. Naboth would not let him have the vineyard that he wanted for an herb garden. Tauntingly Jezebel asked him if in truth he ruled in Israel; if he was too weak to get what he wanted she would get it for him. So Jezebel wrote letters, which she signed with the king's seal, to the elders and nobles bidding them proclaim a fast, set Naboth in a prominent place, have ready two witnesses to swear that they had heard Naboth curse God and the king, and then have him carried without the city and stoned to death.

Naboth's Death and Elijah's Rebuke and Prophecy. Our lesson tells how Jezebel's plot was carried out, and how Ahab, informed by Jezebel of the result, had gone to take possession of the vineyard when he was met by Elijah and sternly denounced for his crime.

Ahab's Abasement. When told by the prophet of the retribution that would overtake him and Jezebel and his descendants, Ahab put on sackcloth and fasted. Then came the Divine word to Elijah: Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's day will I bring the evil upon his house.

The Effect of Ahab's Sin. Since the division of the kingdom it has not been possible for the king of Israel, however much a man like Omri might have wished it, to make himself a despot. The people were jealous of their rights. Elijah was the defender of their liberties, the champion in special

of the free landowner. The murder of Naboth seems to have aroused the people more than did the Baal worship of the royal house, and to have had greater influence in bringing about the revolution which overthrew the house of Omri.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jezreel, the modern Zerim, is on a hill two hundred feet high on the Plain of Esdraelon. Apparently it was the summer residence of Ahab, or perhaps it either replaced or rivalled Samaria as the capital at this time. Eastward between Mt. Gilboa and the hills of Galilee the broad Valley of Jezreel sweeps downward to Bethshan and the Jordan: westward the Great Plain of Esdraelon extends to the sea. The city was on the highways from Damascus to Egypt, from the coast to the Jordan. Straight before it is the range of Carmel, and Elijah's course to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot after the contest on Carmel was doubtless over the path which today branches from the road to Nazareth and crosses due west to the foot of Carmel, following thence the bed of Kishon to Haifa. Naboth's vineyard seems to have lain before the palace windows. Today wine-presses cut into the rock are to be seen on the eastern side of the hill.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Do you ever wonder where the sparrows get their food in the cold days when the ground is covered with snow? I wondered one day, and pitied them so that I threw out a large handful of crumbs to them. How pleased the birds were! Then one bird seized a large piece and flew off with it. He could not eat it in peace because the other birds flew after him. They chased that sparrow up and down, here and there, trying to get that crumb away from him, but he held it tight in his beak and would not let it go. There was still plenty of crumbs on the ground which the other sparrows could have had, but the only one they seemed to care for was the one this sparrow had.

Tell your pupils about these birds, and then tell them about things which children do that are just as silly. Even kings are sometimes as silly as sparrows and children. That one should not covet what another has is a hard lesson for children to learn. They are naturally selfish. Show your pupils how selfish Ahab was. King Ahab was in his palace at Jezreel. Point it out on the map. One day he went out and looked about him. "All this land is mine," he thought, and then a frown came over his face, for he was looking down upon a vineyard not far from his palace grounds. "If I only owned that vineyard I could have a fine garden of sweet-smelling herbs there!" he said to himself, sighing. Make your pupils see the King in his fit of sulks, and teach the lesson about when to sulk, p. 387. Let them see themselves as they act sometimes, when they are disappointed. Teach the Golden Text in connection with Ahab's words, verse 20, and explain it. See p. 388.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At Potsdam, not far from Berlin, there is a castle surrounded by beautiful parks and gardens. On the left of the castle, at a little distance, stands a very fine octagonal building, which is a picture gallery filled with famous works of art. But on the right side at about the same distance, there stands the strangest building to be seen in such a place (Mr. James Stalker, quoted in "The Expositor's Treasury" describes it and tells how it happens to be there). It is a mill, very old-looking, with its roof covered with gray moss, and sticking aloft in the air is one long arm of the sails with which it used to catch the wind which drove it. The story is this. When the King who built the palace wished to construct a residence for himself on this beautiful knoll, he bought up the land from the persons to whom it belonged. But the miller was unwilling to sell the mill where his forefathers had worked and he had been brought up. He was offered any price he chose to ask for it, but still he refused. Of course, the King might have taken it by force; but although he was a strong and fierce King he was righteous and said: "Well, if the miller refuses to sell his mill, I can not take it from him; there

it must stand." And there it stands to this day. The King is long since dead; the miller is long since dead, and his descendants have gone elsewhere, but the mill is still allowed to stand in the midst of the garden and beside the palace, as a witness to the fact that the King, though powerful, was also just.

I am sure you have been thinking how unlike this was to the conduct of King Ahab. Where did Ahab have a palace? What lay near which he coveted? To whom did it belong? What did King Ahab wish to do with it?

For Older Pupils. Startling results have come from the excavations upon the site of ancient Samaria carried on by Harvard University and financed by Mr. Jacob H. Schiff. Below the remains of Roman and Greek and Babylonian periods, ruins of a massive structure covering an acre and a half have been found which belong to the ancient Hebrew occupation. It is the only palace of a Hebrew King ever found, and is probably the ivory palace which Ahab built for himself, 1 K. 22.39. An alabaster vase inscribed with the name of Ahab's contemporary, Osorkon II of Egypt, has been unearthed and a hundred clay tablets have been dug up, which may have belonged to Ahab's library. One of them is said to be a letter from an Assyrian King sent to King Ahab, and a number of them contain an inventory of the furniture of the royal palace. In a storeroom adjoining the palace fragments of pottery written upon in ink, in the ancient Hebrew script, have been found. These were labels for jars of oil and wine, as the writing shows. The jars were filled with "wine of the vineyard of the Tell"—Naboth's vineyard, perhaps, which was "hard by the palace"! Standing there our little party thought not so much about the view over the plain and sea, as about that far distant time when King Ahab and Queen Jezebel formed their diabolic plot to please the King, who lay in a fit of sulks, with face turned to the wall, because he could not add Naboth's vineyard to his possessions.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Jezebels

Jezebel and Lady Macbeth. Recall that scene in Macbeth where Lady Macbeth urges her husband on to the murder of the king. Macbeth has told her that

> "We will proceed no further in this business:
> He hath honor'd me of late,"

and then Lady Macbeth's scorn blazes forth, and she accuses him of being a coward

> "Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
> Like the poor cat i' the adage."

"Prithee, peace," Macbeth answers:

> "I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none."

Her words prevail and Macbeth nerves himself to murder Duncan the king. But he brings back to their chamber the bloody daggers.

> "Why did you bring those daggers from the place?
> They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
> The sleeping grooms with blood,"

commands Lady Macbeth. But Macbeth replies:

> "I'll go no more:
> I am afraid to think what I have done;
> Look on't again I dare not."

"Infirm of purpose! Give me the dagger!" then exclaims Lady Macbeth, and when she returns from carrying out her purpose she cries: "My hands are of your color, but I shame to wear a heart so white."

How like Lady Macbeth's "Give me the dagger!" is Queen Jezebel's "I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth!" How like Lady Macbeth is Jezebel

herself! "A very Jezebel" we say of some strong-willed, masterful woman, who fears neither God nor man, a Lucretia Borgia who dominated the papacy, a Catherine de' Medici who really was the one who ordered the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.

From the time that Jezebel entered the kingdom of Israel as its queen till her death, her evil deeds form a large part of its history, and her evil influence was continued in the southern kingdom through her daughter Athaliah, who married the son of Jehoshaphat.

Herodias. Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, it is not lawful for thee to have her. And Herodias bade Salome say, Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist. And his head was brought on a platter, and given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother.

II Sulking

The Sulking King. Ahab flung himself on his couch, turned away his face, and would eat no bread. The weak rage and childish sulking of Ahab are very characteristic of a feeble and selfish nature, accustomed to be humored and not thwarted. These fits of temper seem to have been common with him; for he was in one at the end of the preceding chapter, as he is now. "No meat will down with him for want of a salad, because wanting Naboth's vineyard for a garden of herbs." As he lies there, like a spoiled child, all because he could not get his own way, he may serve for an example of the misery of unbridled selfishness and unregulated desires. An acre or two of land was a small matter to get into such a state about, and there are few things that are worth a wise or a strong man's being so troubled. Hezekiah might "turn his face to the wall" in the extremity of sickness; but Ahab in doing it is only a poor feeble creature who has weakly set his heart on what is not his, and weakly whimpers because he cannot have it. To be thus at the mercy of our own ravenous desires, and so utterly miserable when they are thwarted, is unworthy of manhood, and is sure to bring many a bitter moment; for there are more disappointments than gratifications in store for such a one. *Alexander Maclaren,* in the *First Book of Kings.*

A Man who Sulked Thirty-one Years. In my State a man died five years ago who had not spoken a word for thirty-one years. He had been a gay young man, fond of society, and at thirty years of age possessed a prosperous farm and a fine pair of gray horses of which he was very proud. Then misfortune overtook him; he lost his farm and his horses had to be sacrificed. Inconsolable, he went to bed and turned his face to the wall, and for a long time refused either to speak or eat Food was left on a table near his bed. and when he was nearly starved he arose one night and ate and took a stroll out of doors. He continued this practice each night until he slipped on the ice and broke his arm. After that accident, although in perfect health, he never left his bed. For thirty-one years he lay there and refused to speak. He was cared for by his widowed sister, out of her scanty income and $3.00 a week which she received for his maintenance from Bedminster Township. For the last ten years of his life physicians expected him to die at any time from sheer inactivity. Just before he died he made an effort to speak to his devoted sister, but in vain, for the long years of silence had deprived him of the power to articulate.

When to Sulk. The other day I met a man older and wiser than any of the rest. He was very old and very wise, and he told me:

"It is bad luck to cry on Monday. To cry on Tuesday makes red eyes. Crying on Wednesday is bad for children's heads and for the heads of other people. It is said that if a child begins to cry on Thursday, he will find it hard to stop. It is not best for children to cry on Friday. It makes them unhappy. Never cry on Saturday. It is too busy a day. Tears shed on the Sabbath are sad and bitter. Children should on no account cry at night. The nights are for sleep. They may cry whenever they please, but not at any of these times, unless it is for something serious."

I wrote down the rules just as the old man gave them to me. Of course they will be of no use to boys and girls who are past six, for those children

do not cry. The wise man meant them for the little ones—the millions of little boys and girls who want to do the right thing and the very best thing. *St. Nicholas.*

III Be Sure your Sin will Find You Out

Ahab's Sin. It was Jezebel who concocted the plot to murder Naboth, and who had it carried out. Ahab did not know about it, it seems, until she bade him take possession of the vineyard, for Naboth was dead. And yet Elijah's question is, Hast *thou* killed, and also taken possession? And he denounces him as having sold himself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah. Was Ahab responsible for what Jezebel had done?

If several boys stand around a tree and eat the stolen apples which one boy who alone has climbed the tree throws down to them, is the boy in the tree the only guilty one? Is the clerk who uses a false weight a cheat while the employer who approves of the transaction is not? Is not a man who hires an assassin to kill another held by law as guilty as though he had done the deed himself? But, you say, Ahab did not know that Jezebel was going to kill Naboth. He knew that she was going to get possession of the vineyard, and he knew that she could only do so by foul means. He was content to let her obtain it in any way she chose. And when she had accomplished her purpose, he was eager to reap the fruits of her crime. Josephus says that when Ahab learned what Jezebel had done "he sprang from his bed with delight." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." In his sight the weak mortal who lets another do the wicked work for him and rejoices in the spoils has sold himself to do evil as surely as though he did it with his own hands. Ahab was a perjurer, a murderer, a thief. He had abandoned himself to the service of sin.

"What did your vineyard cost you, Ahab? Very cheap, was it not?" questions Mark Guy Pearse. And then he answers the question: "It cost *himself*. For that vineyard he gave his hope, his peace, his very life, *himself*. Sin has only one price. It takes the man."

Thy Blow.

Thou smotest a weak thing and laid it low;
It could not rise and smite thee back. And so,
Thou thinkest thou shalt go unsmitten? Know,
The Force Invincible received thy blow.

Myrta Lockett Avary, in *Outlook.*

Be Sure your Sin will find out You. Our Golden Text reads a little differently: it says, Be sure your sin will find you out, but *you* is the emphatic word, and the text does not mean, as so often it is taken to mean, that your sin will be found out, but rather that you will be found out by your sin, that your sin will find out you. Your sin may never be found out, but it will find you out, for you cannot sin without suffering in character, though you may sin without suffering in reputation. Ahab's sin found him out. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" he exclaimed to Elijah, before that prophet said a word to him about his crime, for Ahab's conscience told him he was guilty.

Eggs that Croak. A traveller in West Africa vouches for a curious discovery. He was walking along a dry path when he heard a croaking noise that seemed to come from beneath his feet. Digging to investigate the cause, he discovered thirteen crocodile eggs at a depth of eighteen inches. All the young crocodiles hatched out within half an hour after being dug up. As I read his statement I thought, what a parable that is of sin. Sin is an egg that croaks, it refuses to be hidden. The sinner may think that he has put it out of his life, that he will remember it no more, but far down below the surface of things its presence makes itself known, and though it may not finally be brought to the light of day for all to gaze upon it, it haunts the sinner unceasingly.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness, we read in Isiaah. Take heed and beware.

Such a spirit as Ahab's, who pouted and fretted because he could not have what he wanted, leads some Jezebel to suggest an evil plan by which to grasp

the longed-for prize. Beware of indulging in such a mood, and beware of the terrible influence of an ignoble friend.

Ahab sinned in vain; he thought to reap a great advantage, but he reaped a great penalty. Every one who injures another wields a boomerang which recoils upon himself.

Our Prayer: Our Father in heaven, incline our hearts unto thy testimonies and not to covetousness. Forgive our selfishness, our greed, our sulkiness when disappointed, and our willingness to profit from the wrong-doing of others. If one or all of these evil traits of Ahab's are ours, make us truly repentant, repentant not like Ahab because of the fear of punishment but because we have sinned against thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The great Ahabs that swallow up the poor Naboths. ("By outbidding, underselling, sometimes deliberately setting themselves to extinguish every business which competes with their own; doing everything which the law permits and a great many things which the moral law does not permit, to accomplish this end.")

2. The nobles that do a Jezebel's bidding. Police protection of lawbreakers. ("The deal that Queen Jezebel made with the elders of the city was no more unscrupulous than some of the manœuvers by which the saloon-keepers and lawbreakers have maintained their power over the municipal government in our larger cities.") Recall the case of Becker and the "four Gun-Men" in New York two years ago.

3. Murder and punishment in the United States. Less than 5% of the murders committed are followed by convictions. In Germany 80% is the record. Greater efficiency of foreign police, greater sentimentality among American jurors which leads them to acquit confessed murderers on all sorts of pleas, seem to be the reasons for the way justice is meted out in the two countries. See "Justice, not Sentimentality," *Outlook*, June 17, 1911; "Promoting Crime", August 19, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON.

Questions to look up. 1. Give an account of Elisha's first meeting with Elijah. (1 K. 19.19-21.) 2. What occupation had Elisha followed before Elijah called him? 3. What does 2 K. 3.11 tell us was Elisha's relation to Elijah? (*Guide*, ¶ 21, p. 390.) 4. Where were Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho? (*Guide*, p. 393.) 5. What waters were divided for Moses? (Ex. 14.21-22.) 6. For Joshua? 7. To whom were the words "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof" again applied? (2 K. 13.14.) 8. How did Elijah once wish to die? 9. What earlier hero was translated? (Gen. 5.24.) 10. What does the word "translated" mean? 11. Tell the story of the ascension of Christ. 12. What vain search was made for Elijah's body? (2 K. 2.16-18.) 13. What did Elisha do with Elijah's mantle? 14. What king testified that Elisha was a true prophet? (2 K. 3.12.)

Questions to think about. 1. Why did Elijah each time ask Elisha to stay behind? 2. Why would not Elisha leave him? (*Guide*, ¶ 3, p. 390.) 3. How did the "sons of the prophets" know that Elijah was to be taken away shortly? (*Guide*, ¶ 1, p. 391.) 4. Why was the other side of Jordan a fitting place for Elijah's departure from earth? 5. What did Elisha mean by his request, verse 9? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 391.) 6. Was it selfish in Elisha to ask for a "double portion" of his master's spirit? 7. What did Elijah mean by the condition he named, verse 10? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 391.) 8. What is the meaning of "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof"? (*Guide*, p. 391.) 9. How was Elijah taken to Heaven? 10. Whose grave did no man ever behold? (Dt. 34.) 11. What is your final judgment on Elijah's character? 12. How do the Gospels tell us that Elijah was given a high place in the hearts of the Israelites? 13. When had Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha, and what did the act mean? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 391.) 14. Whose mantle would you wish to wear some day? 15. What qualities does Elisha show in this chapter? Why does Elisha call Elijah "my father"? (*Guide*, ¶ 7, p. 391.)

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Ahab, write about Ahab's Sin and Elijah's Rebuke.

LESSON II—OCTOBER 10

ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN

Golden Text

In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16.11

LESSON II Kings 2.1-12a MEMORIZE verses 11, 12a

And it came to pass, when Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee: for Jehovah hath sent me as far as Beth-el. And Elisha said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el. 3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. 5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came near to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it: hold ye your peace. 6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me to the Jordan. And he said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by the Jordan. 8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. 9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless,* if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. 11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *When Jehovah would.* "That *when* is the doctrine of Providence over human life" (*Parker*).—*Take up.* Compare Lev. 5.24. "The writer uses the figure which most nearly describes such a manifestation as that by which Elijah was translated" (*Lumby*).—*Elisha.* Since the account of his call, 1 K. 19.19-21, we have heard nothing of Elisha, but in 2 K. 3.11 he is described as the one "who poured water on the hands of Elijah", that is, who acted as the attendant of the aged prophet.—*Went from Gilgal.* From Gilgal, where many of the prophets lived, they went to visit other schools of the prophets.

2. *Tarry here, I pray thee.* So Naomi besought Ruth to leave her when she was returning from the land of Moab, Ruth 1.15. Perhaps he would test his follower's devotion and faithfulness, or perhaps he wished to be alone at the end as Moses had been alone. "I would not mind dying", a man who was near his end said to me, a man who, like Elijah, was a lonely man by temperament, "if I only could go off somewhere and die all alone."—*As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth.* A solemn assertion, repeated in vv. 4 and 6. Compare Ruth's answer, Ruth 1.16, 17.—*I will not leave thee.* As the faithful disciple, the devoted friend, and the true successor he could not leave him.—*Down to Bethel.* See p. 393.

3. *The sons of the prophets.* Youths in training as assistants of the prophets, grouped in various schools and colleges. There were schools of prophets

in the time of Samuel.—*Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master today?* Probably Elijah was very feeble and this made them feel that he could not live long.—*Today.* This may have meant in oriental speech "very soon", not necessarily that day.—*Hold your peace.* "This is no subject for idle talk" (*Farrar*).

6. *To the Jordan.* To Gilead across the Jordan.—*And they two went on.* "So these two, leaving the sons of the prophets behind, passed down the falling land as the great planets pass to their setting through the groups of lesser stars. The mountains of The-Other-Side filled the view ahead of them, and in these mountains lay the sepulchre of Moses. He who in helplessness had already fled for new inspiration to Horeb, could not fail to wonder whether God was to lay him to rest beside his forerunner on Nebo" (*George Adam Smith*).

8. *Wrapped it together.* He made a roll of his mantle and used it as Moses did his rod, Ex. 7.17, 20.—*And smote the waters, and they were divided.* Compare Ex. 14.21, 22. "As there are fords at Jericho, the object of this miracle, as of the one subsequently ascribed to Elisha, is not self-evident. Nothing is more certain than that there is a divine economy in the exercise of supernatural powers" (*Farrar*).

9. *When they were gone over.* Or, *as they went,* RVm.—*A double portion of thy spirit.* That is, the portion of the first born, RVm, When Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha, 1 K. 19.19 he signified that he adopted Elisha as his son. See Dt. 21.17. He does not ask for twice as much power and inspiration as Elijah had, but for twice what a younger son would inherit, twice as much as, perhaps, the other sons of the prophets would receive; he would be a worthy successor of his master. His was a far less powerful personality than Elijah's.

10. *A hard thing.* Your request is not in my power to grant, but in God's.—*If thou see me when I am taken from thee.* That would be a sign that God had granted his prayer. Or, as Dr. George Matheson interprets: "Separated from the figurative element which contains them, his words amount to this: 'The test of a kindred spirit is sight in absence. Can you sustain that test? Can you see me when I am taken up? Can you be impelled by my influence, can I be a motive in your life, when I have ceased to be in truth with it? If so, you have proved your possession of a kindred nature; you have maintained your right to wear my mantle.'"

11. *A chariot of fire.* Or, *chariots,* RVm. Compare 2 K. 6.17. Perhaps the dazzling lightning appeared to Elisha as chariots of fire. Elijah is often represented as ascending in a flaming chariot: the text merely says that "he went up by a whirlwind into heaven", the chariots attending. "In the inextricable interweaving of fact and figure, it is enough to mark how fittingly such an account closes such a life. He had appeared in the history we know not whence, and now he is gone in like manner" (*Dean Stanley*). "What Elisha saw was a vision, as in 2 K. 6.17, whence they could see 'whose eyes Jehovah had opened'" (*Jeremias*).—*Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.* See below. "The lesson here for us is that the way of our going, as well as the time, is of the Lord's determination, and not ours. And we can so live as to slip into God's heaven. We can so live that men shall say, 'He was not, for God took him'" (*Joseph Parker*).

12. *My father.* A title of affection, probably used among the prophets. Compare 1 Sam. 10.12.—*The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.* Chariots may be taken as standing for "chariotry", the armed forces of Israel. The clause is in opposition with "my father", and is addressed to Elijah. Dr. Clarke gives the Chaldaic translation, which has the sense of the words: "My master, my master, who by thy intercession wast of more use to Israel than horses or chariots." When Luther died, one of his co-workers exclaimed: "Alas, he has gone, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof, who has ruled the church in this age of the world." Some scholars, notably Dr. Maclaren, think the clause refers to the vision, verse 11. Against this interpretation is the same use of the words by king Joash at Elisha's death-bed, 2 K. 13.14, where this could not be the sense.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.* It is true of Elijah as of Moses, that "no man knoweth his sepulchre; no man knoweth his resting-place

until this day." Yet Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Druses venerate the traditional tomb of Elijah on Mount Carmel, and Mohammedans offer sacrifice here upon a special day in midsummer. Sufferers from nervous troubles and insanity are brought and left in the cave for a night or more, for the place is said to have for such curative powers.

In Jewish and Mohammedan legends Elijah is the mysterious wanderer who often appears and disappears. Ever since his death the Jew has been awaiting his return. In the era of the Talmud, goods without owners were laid aside until Elijah's coming. To-day a seat is prepared for him at the circumcision of a Jewish child, and at a certain moment in the passover feast the door is opened for him to enter.

12. *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.* Similarly today, leading Arab chiefs are called "Pillars of the house", or "Swords of religion."

13. *He took up the mantle of Elijah.* When a great teacher dies he bequeathes his patched mantle to the disciple that he most esteems, and the moment the elect disciple puts on the holy mantle he is vested with the whole power and sanctity of his predecessor. The mantles which were used by ascetics and saints have always been the objects of religious veneration in the East. The holy man's power is founded upon his sacred character, and that rests upon his poverty and contempt of worldly goods. His mantle is his all, and its transfer marks out his heir. Some of those sacred mantles can be traced for seven centuries, and their value increases with their age. *John Malcolm,* in *History of Persia,* quoted by *Dr. Alexander White.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When had Elijah learned that Elisha was to be his successor? Tell about the call of Elisha. In what words did Naomi urge Ruth to leave her and why? In what words did Ruth answer? Where is Bethel? Gilgal? Jericho? What young king was told to ask what he wished, and what was his answer?

The Death of Ahab and of his Son and Successor Ahaziah. The First Book of Kings closes with an account of Ahab's alliance with Jehoshaphat against Syria and his death in battle, Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah, and the succession of Ahaziah, son of Ahab, in Israel. Ahaziah did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and walked in the way of his father. Second Kings tells in its first chapter of the death of Ahaziah and of his son Jehoram's succession.

The Translation of Elijah. How long Elijah lived and how the closing years of his life were spent, we do not know. It may be that the lesson he learned on Mount Horeb, that the idolatry of the people could be overthrown, not by one great miracle, but by long continued effort, led him to engage in active superintendence of the schools of the prophets, teaching those in training there how to complete his mission.

There is no chronological note in the account to tell us when he ended his work; it was "when Jehovah would take Elijah into heaven". Because 2 Ch. 21.12 mentions a letter from Elijah sent to Jehoram of Judah, who made himself king along with Jehoshaphat in the fifth year of Jehoram of Israel, some scholars believe that Elijah's translation is recorded too early in Second Kings.

Elisha becomes Prophet in Elijah's Stead. Elisha rent his clothes in token of his grief at the loss of Elijah, took up Elijah's mantle, and went to the bank of the Jordan where he repeated Elijah's miracle. The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha, said the prophets who had been left on the western bank of the river, and at once they accepted Elisha as Elijah's true successor. There must have been good Divinity Halls in those days, observes Dr. Alexander Whyte, since there were fifty probationers of such humility and belief in better men than themselves! The "probationers" urged Elisha to send them in search of Elijah, but knowing such a search would be futile, he refused at first, but when they persisted in their request he allowed them to go. They found him not.

Malachi prophesied that Elijah would be the precursor of the Messiah (4.4-6), and Jesus taught his disciples that John the Baptist had come in the Spirit and power of Elijah (Mt. 1.11-14). At the Transfiguration Elijah and Moses were seen (Mt. 17.3).

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

There were at least three places called *Gilgal,* literally, a circle of stones, a cromlech. The Gilgal from which Elijah and Elisha started could not have been the one in the low Jordan Valley, for they went from Gilgal *down* to Bethel. It was probably the one among the hills of Ephraim, about eight miles north of *Bethel.* Bethel was on the southern frontier of Samaria, on the great highway between Galilee and Judea. From a mountain east of Bethel Lot surveyed the land and made his choice. At Bethel Jacob had his vision, and here Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves for worship. *Jericho,* the city taken by Joshua on entering the promised land, was in the Jordan valley six miles from the river, and also the same distance from the Dead Sea. From Bethel to Jericho was a distance of about fifteen miles. When the two prophets crossed the Jordan into *Moab* they were near the spot where Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and near Mount Nebo, where Moses lay buried in the grave which no man knew.

As you bring out the story, follow the course on your map from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho, to the Jordan, and across to the neighborhood of Mount Nebo.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Character is both caught and taught. A teacher's mantle—his character—may fall upon his pupils.

The teacher's compensation comes in seeing his pupils grow into strong manhood or womanhood, doing their share in the world's service, capable of taking his work when he passes to his reward. How proud some day-school teacher is of the fact that he has helped to mold the mind of a lad who becomes President of the United States! How grateful a Sunday-school teacher should be for the opportunity of helping to mold the character of many lads or lassies who become noble leaders in the world's work! To see them occupying places of responsibility and usefulness, to know they are helping to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness upon the earth, must repay teachers for any sacrifice they may have made in their behalf.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Make Elisha, not Elijah, the central figure in this lesson for your pupils. Begin with the call of Elisha when he was at work ploughing (1 K. 19.19-21), picture his surprise when Elijah threw his mantle over him, explain the meaning of the act, and dwell on Elisha's readiness to follow Elijah. For many years Elisha was with Elijah, as his young pupil and also "pouring water on his hands" (2K 3.11), or doing for him all the small services that the aged prophet needed. Then picture the scene as the two men walked along a country road together. Repeat the conversation at Gilgal and Bethel and Jericho in the same words. Your pupils will especially enjoy the repetitions in this lesson. The three times that Elijah tells Elisha to tarry, the three times that Elisha answers, "As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee": twice the sons of the prophets question Elisha, "Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy hand today?" and twice Elisha answers, "Yea, I also know it, hold ye your peace." Show how Elisha's love for his master made him persist in following him. Picture the old man folding together his goatskin mantle and with it striking the waters of the Jordan, and fifty prophets watching from afar, as the two crossed over to the other side. Make clear Elisha's great desire that he might have his Master's spirit and be worthy of continuing his work. Tell them about the little slave girl, p. 395, and expand its application. Then describe the swift rush of the whirlwind, the lightning, the horses of fire and the chariot of fire that seemed to Elisha to part them, and Elijah's disappearance in the whirlwind, as God took him to himself. His mantle fell at Elisha's feet; Elisha was to continue his work.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON.

For Younger Pupils. How was it that Queen Jezebel once made up her mind that Elijah should die? Where was it that Elijah himself once wished to die? When did the end of Elijah's life come? "When God would take him up to heaven." That was not when Jezebel would have Elijah killed, nor was it when Elijah was so discouraged that he prayed to die; God still had work for the prophet, and the end came only in God's good time. If Elijah had died when he wished out in the wilderness it would have been an inglorious ending; the end which came was glorious, as mysterious as had been his life.

As you bring out the story, trace the journey from Gilgal to the other side of the Jordan.

For Older Pupils. As the sword is the emblem of the warrior, so the ermine is of the judge. The official robe of the judge in England is lined and faced with the skins of little animals called the ermine, accordingly the ermine stands for the office.

The graduates of certain colleges in England wear a lamb's skin hood or cloak. Did you know that these insignia can be traced back to Elijah's mantle, which was the skin of an animal dressed with the hair on?

When the mantle of Elijah, the emblem of his authority as a prophet, fell to Elisha, that was Elisha's induction into the prophet's office. For Elijah the end of his ministry, and for Elisha the beginning of his ministry, has come. The story forcibly recalls the time when Moses laid down his work and Joshua took it up. Many parallels could be drawn between the lives of Moses and Elijah, and of Joshua and Elisha. As in his deep discouragement Elijah sought Mount Horeb, where Moses had communed with God, so now as he realizes God is about to take him to himself he seeks the spot where God had taken Moses. Alone Moses had ascended Mount Nebo; alone Elijah would go to the same land of Moab, but Elisha would not leave his master, his love impelled him to persist in following.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Called Home

The Three Translations. Early in the Bible record, in the fifth chapter of Genesis, we read of the first translation. And Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him. Beautifully has Dr. J. T. McFarland expressed all that we know about Enoch:

They talked and walked, down many years—
The way was called The Vale of Tears;
But he who walked with God received
Such comfort that he little grieved.
And walking thus, and talking so,
The man and God fared onward slow,
Until they reached a secret spot—
God took him, and the man was not.

And it came to pass many centuries later, that Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven. He, too, had walked and talked with God; God took him and he was not. The rushing whirlwind was a fitting accompaniment for the departure of the stormy prophet.

But no man ever walked and talked with God as did his Son Jesus Christ. Forty days after his resurrection he and his disciples were on the Mount of Olives over against Bethany. And he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

In Thy Presence is Fullness of Joy; In Thy Right Hand there are Pleasures for Evermore. A Canadian writer stood at twilight upon a wharf, gazing across a bay. Night swiftly settled down, and straight in the track of one long arrow of light remaining a flock of wild ducks came speeding, wild, frantic, free things, guided by instinct towards the marsh-lands far westward—their old home and resting-grounds.

Two immigrants were standing near him. As the wild fowl flew past the older spoke.

"They be goin' 'ome, lad," he said wistfully.

"Aye," sighed his companion, "they be goin' 'ome."

There was a moment's pause and then the first man spoke. "They be most like 'appy fer th' goin', Tom".

"Aye, Jack and why shouldn't 'em be 'appy agoin' 'ome?"

And their words brought this beautiful thought to the mind of the listener:

Gladly the wild fowl skim the darkened foam
At set of sun;
Swiftly to far-off marsh, to nest and home;
The day is done;
God grant that to our souls at night may steal
The joy and freedom that his wild birds feel!

The Time is in the Father's Hands. A little girl was stringing beads. She had strung them all, and I looked on, expecting to see her tie the ends of the string together, but instead she suddenly pulled off half of them and began to string them over.

We can't do that way with our years, thought I. They follow one after the other, and when they have all been joined we can't add a single additional one, nor take away some of them and live them over differently. To some of his children God grants a long string of years—to many but a short one. It is as God wills.

We All Die Full of Life. The tent of our flesh may perish, but the dweller within it is destined to be clothed upon in some other form and place. The native servant of the missionary who died on the field said of him, "Massa, him die full of life". As far as the instincts and possibilities of our highest nature are concerned, we all die full of life. *Rev. Frank Johnson.*

II. The Mantle of the Master

What Receiving the Master's Mantle Means. The mantle did not fall upon the shoulders of the waiting disciple, he had to stoop and pick it up, and turn it to his own use. The act was a necessary part of his successorship. From Elisha's act and words have come our proverb regarding the transference of unfinished tasks, the succession of the gifts of gifted men. The act is pictured in the Roman catacombs, showing that the early Christians in the loss of departed friends found consolation in the belief that God buries the workmen but carries on the work, raises up successors who may have more than ordinary ability to complete what has been begun. But though the successor may reap where another has sowed, he must toil to do it. "We often hear people saying of one whose gifts or graces they covet, 'I wish his mantle might fall on me' ", observes *Forward.* "There are many desired 'mantles' that might be found and appropriated, but they do not fall upon any shoulders and fold around them without effort."

How to Gain the Great Master's Spirit. We turn to Christ's ascension, and we see no mantle falling upon any successor, for no one could step into his place, but we do hear the promise of power given to that waiting group of disciples. Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses. And at Pentecost we see that power bestowed. The elder son's portion was their's—and may be everyone's.

A statue of a beautiful Greek slave-girl, neatly and becomingly dressed, once stood in the market place of Athens. A dirty, ragged slave-girl stopped and gazed at the statue in great wonderment. The next day she came again to gaze, but this time her face was washed and her hair was combed. On the third day her dress had been washed and mended. Day after day she stopped to look at the wonderful model, and day by day she imitated something she saw there till no one would have recognized in her the girl as first she was. So we may study and imitate our Great Model, catching more and more of his spirit from day to day, till we, too, are transformed.

When a novitiate is received into the order of the Buddhist priesthood he

kneels before the idol and incense is piled on his forehead in three small heaps and then set on fire. There the young man kneels till the incense is wholly burned, and the three scars that it leaves on his forehead are the badge of his priesthood. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads, wrote John in Revelation. They that have his name on their foreheads hereafter are they whose visible badge here and now is the doing of Christian deeds.

III. Being Succeeded

The Method of the Truly Great. Ibsen, in one of his memorable plays, "The Master Builder", represents the master builder as oppressed by a strange fear. He hears the young knocking at the door; and he fears that the young will enter in and dispossess him. Such a fear as this is impossible to the wise and magnanimous man. The wise and magnanimous man has learned long ago the truth that the necessary man does not exist, and that all the work we do is incomplete in itself; it is but an instalment in the plan of universal progress. The truly great and magnanimous man does what Moses did. He attaches young men to him and teaches them his method and cheerfully anticipates the hour when they will take up the work which falls unfinished from his hands. And the youth who is magnanimous and noble-hearted will rejoice to be the humble pupil of the man who is fit to instruct him. He will learn to serve, that hereafter he may be fit to rule. *W. J. Dawson,* in *The Evangelistic Note.*

How a Missionary Gained a Successor. In the Yukon Valley in Alaska an Indian missionary lay dying of starvation. He must go and leave his work unfinished, some one must take his place and carry it on, but who would do it? There was only an Indian lad with him, and he had not known or cared much about the missionary's work. "Amos," he said, "I am about to leave you, but I want to give you this book, God's Word, and I want you to read it. I want you to teach it to my people." After Amos had buried his friend, he sat down alone to read the book he had left him. He went back to the missionary settlement and asked to be taught, and now he is carrying on the older missionary's work.

The Bequest. "So the world goes on. Man after man serves his generation by the will of God and is gathered to his fathers; and a new arm grasps the mantle to smite the Jordan, and a new voice speaks from his empty place, and men recognize the successor and forget the predecessor." Thus speaks one of the greatest preachers this generation has seen. Was he under his juniper-tree when he said it? The predecessor is not forgotten.

Many years ago a pastor's wife started a sewing society among the women of the congregation. During her lifetime, and for a long time afterward, the society flourished and did valuable work; but at last there came a period of great discouragement. It was twenty years since the minister's wife had died; many things can change in twenty years, and the sewing society was no longer what it used to be. Finally there came a meeting when discouragement reached a crisis, and the question of disbanding was seriously discussed.

For a few minutes one of the old members listened in silence. Then she rose; the tears shone in her eyes.

"My friends," she said quietly, "this sewing society was formed by Mrs. Hall."

That was all, but it was enough. At the mention of the loved name, discouragement lifted like a cloud and courage was kindled once more. Disband the society that *she* had organized? It was not to be thought of. Eagerly they set themselves to the task of making their work worthy of the dear memory they cherished, and years later the sewing society was still doing splendid work.

The *Youth's Companion* tells the incident, and thus comments: It is only one illustration out of many of the heritage that great and loving souls leave behind them the world over. We long to leave money for our loved ones,—that which shall give them pleasure and power,—but no money can give power to resist temptation, conquer discouragement, and keep the heart lifted to the vision. Money cannot do these things, but pure lives can. Here is a heritage that each one who wills may leave to those he loves. What a pity it is if, having this high privilege, we go our way on the great journey, and leave no inspiration behind.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Ask what I shall do for thee, said Elijah. How that tested Elisha! How our prayers in which we ask God for blessings test us!

With Elisha's sense of responsibility was coupled a sense of need: only with the help of Elijah's God could he carry on Elijah's work. Do we ever assume a duty without asking Divine help in its accomplishment?

"The Spirit which came out from God, which is akin to God, returns to God, who gave it; lives with God."

Our Prayer: I thank thee for my hallowed dead, O God! I will thank thee in the absence of outward evidence—in the midst of the great silence! When I stand beside the grave that professes to hold my dead, I seem to understand the words, "In that day ye shall ask me *nothing*". There are some things for which it would be superfluous to pray. Could I pray that thou shouldst love the Lord Jesus! Neither need I ask the immortality of human love. It is a part of thyself; thou *couldst* not let it die. Therefore, I will not pray for my dead; I will give *thanks* for them. I will bring a wreath to the sepulchre—a wreath of immortelles. I will sing an Easter hymn in the *winter* of the year. I will number the departed among the members of my household; I will say, with the little girl by the gravestone, "We are seven!" I will keep a place for the old chair in a corner of my heart. I will garner the old songs in the fields of memory. I will preserve the birthdays on the fly-leaf of the old Bible as anniversaries, not of the dead, but of the living. And when, within thy house, I bend my knee in the moment allotted to silent prayer, I will not say, "Father, raise up my dead!" but, "Father, I bless thy name, that my dead are raised already!" (*George Matheson*).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Thy mystery of heaven. See *The Outlook*, July 26, 1913; August 30, 1913, p. 979; August 2, 1913, p. 741.

2. The sources for our belief respecting the future. See *The Outlook*, February 28, 1914, p. 438; December 30, 1911; November 2, 1912.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the great difference between Elijah and Elisha as prophets? (*Guide*, ¶ 6. p. 400.) 2. What was Elisha's first deed of mercy after he succeeded Elijah as prophet? (2 K. 2.19-22.) 3. What did he do for the Shunamite woman and what did she call him? (2 K. 4.) 4. Where is Damascus? 5. What was the Israelite custom with regard to a leper's abode which was evidently not customary in Damascus? (Lev. 13.46.) 6. What are the Abana and Pharpar rivers called today? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 401.) 7. Describe Naaman's journey from Damascus to Samaria. (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 401.) 8. What power of healing was long credited to the kings of England? (*Guide*, ¶ 2, p. 400.) 9. What blind beggar was told by Jesus to wash in a pool and his sight would be restored? (Jn. 9.7.) 10. What did Naaman mean by his question in verse 12? (*Guide*, p. 399.) 11. What reference did Jesus make to the healing of Naaman? (Lk. 4.27.) 12. What was the value of Naaman's gifts? (*Guide*, ¶ 2, p. 399.) 13. Who was Gehazi, what did he do, and how was he punished? (2 K. 5.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Naaman did not know God: why does it say that by him God had given victory unto Syria? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 398.) 2. What young lad was taken away captive from Israel and proved a great blessing in another land? 3. What can you do to be helpful to others? 4. What river would Naaman have to cross in going to Samaria, and how could he cross it in his chariot? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 401.) 5. Why did the curing of leprosy seem impossible to the king of Israel and not to the prophet? (The one did not know, the other did, the power of God.) 6. Why did the king think that Naaman sought a quarrel with him? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 399.) 7. Why was Naaman wroth? 8. We have a homely saying about "cutting off one's nose to spite one's face"; what does it mean, and how was Naaman in danger of doing this? 9. Why did Naaman include clothing among his gifts? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 399.) 10. Why did Elisha refuse to take Naaman's gift?

Note-Book Work. Finish your Life of Elijah by writing about Elijah's Translation. Begin a Life of Elisha, and write Elisha, the Successor of Elijah.

ELISHA HEALS NAAMAN THE SYRIAN

Golden Text

I am Jehovah that healeth thee. Exodus 15.26

LESSON II Kings 5: verses 1-10, 14 printed MEMORIZE verses 7, 8

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, *but he was* a leper. 2 And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy. 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel. 5 And the king of Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he de parted, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? but consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

14 Then went he down, and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

1. *Captain of the host.* Commander-in-chief of the army.—*The King of Syria.* Probably Ben-hadad.—*A great man with his master.* Highly esteemed.—*Honorable.* "Literally, man of respect".—*By him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria.* "Possibly the enemies from whom the Syrians had been saved were the Assyrians. Naaman, in delivering his countrymen from them, had been an unconscious instrument in the hands of Jehovah." (*Dummelow*).—*But he was a leper.* Notice that the first three words are in italics, showing that they are not in the original Hebrew.—*A leper.* A leper is unclean, he shall dwell alone: without the camp shall his dwelling be, Lev. 13.46. Evidently in Syria there were no such laws regarding lepers as were in force among the Israelites.

2. *In bands.* In plundering parties. Nominally the Syrians and Israelites were at peace.—*Had brought away captive a little maid.* "Border raids of the Philistines and others were frequently made with the special object of carrying off slaves; Jabin's host counted on 'a damsel or two' apiece; the Tyrians, unmindful of 'the brotherly covenant' were the chief dealers in Israelite slaves (Amos 1.6, 9; Joel 3.6)" (*Wood*).—*Recover.* Heal.

3. *She said unto her mistress.*

Who for the likes of me will care?
So whispers many a mournful heart,
When in the weary languid air
For grief or scorn we pine apart.
But One who ne'er forgets is here;
He hath a word for thee to speak.—*Keble.*

NAAMAN'S WIFE AND THE SYRIAN MAID

From a Painting by F. W. Topham

4. *His Lord.* Naaman's lord, the King of Syria.

5. *A letter unto the king of Israel.* Probably Jehoram. See Historical Background. The king of Syria assumes that the king of Israel will order the prophet to heal Naaman.—*Ten talents of silver.* A talent was ninety-six pounds in weight: $20,500 (*Hastings*).—*Six thousand pieces of gold.* Or, *shekels,* RVm. $61,000 (*Hastings*). A shekel was a weight of 224 grains. The silver and gold were weighed, not coined.—*Ten changes of raiment.* See, Gen. 45.22 and ¶ 5 below.

6. *And now.* The first part of the letter, complimentary, is not repeated here. —*That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.* See p. 400.

7. *He rent his clothes.* In token of his dismay.—*Am I God, to kill and make alive?* Only God can cure leprosy, is his thought.—*How he seeketh a quarrel against me.* Or, *an occasion,* RVm. On my failure to cure Naaman he will send his armies against me. Evidently Jehoram thought that the king of Syria was sure of victory and wanted only a pretext for attacking him.

8. *Elisha sent to the king.* Elisha's position as a prophet is very different from that of Elijah in the time of Ahab.

9. For Elisha's course and the answer to the question as to how he crossed the Jordan in his chariot, see ¶ 5, p. 401.

10. *Elisha sent a messenger to him.* He did not honor Naaman by coming out and speaking personally to him.—*Go and wash in the Jordan seven times.* Compare Jesus' direction to the man at the pool of Siloam, Jn. 6.7.—*Thy flesh shall come again to thee.* If the raw flesh turn again, and be changed into white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: he is clean, Lev. 13.17.

11. *Naaman was wroth.* He was treated with scant courtesy, he thought, for so great a man.—*Come out and stand.* Assume a ceremonious attitude.—*Call on the name of his God.* Naaman believed that each country had its own god: he expected Elisha to use some sort of incantation.—*Wave his hand over the place.* As heathen sorcerers would do.

12. *Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?* See p. 401. A quotation from Dr. van Dyke, in "Little Rivers", is pertinent here: "Every river that flows is good, and has something worthy to be loved. But those that we love most are always the ones that we have known best,—the stream that ran before our father's door, the current on which we ventured our first boat or cast our first fly."

13. *His servants came near.* So the servants of Saul constrained him, 1 S. 28.23. Naaman's servants were probably his officers.—*My father.* A customary title of honor and affection.

14. *Then went he down.* Down from Samaria to the Jordan Valley, a distance of twenty miles. Naaman had learned that God is no respecter of persons, that he must be healed as a leper, not as a great man from Damascus, and also that he must take the first step and obey the word of God that came to him through the prophet.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *I will send a letter.* See page 383.

5. *He took with him silver and gold and changes of raiment.* It was customary to take valuable gifts to anyone of whom a favor was sought, or, as seen in the case of the Queen of Sheba, to the one visited. "Hardly any transaction of importance can take place in the East without a gift." says James M. Freeman. "The formal visits which friends make to each other are preceded by presents of fowls, sheep, rice, coffee, and other provisions. A refusal to receive a present is, throughout the East, interpreted as an evidence of enmity. Hence Jacob's anxiety that Esau should accept the gift he offered."

Loading a Camel

Especially valued were the changes of raiment, for in the East fashions of dress do not change as with us. In inventories of a man's wealth the costly garments are included. It is said of a noted oriental poet of the ninth century that "he had so many presents made him during his life-time that at his death he had one hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts and five hundred turbans."

6. *And he brought the letter to the King of Syria.* So today Mohammedans and Jews and Catholics go on long journeys to some shrine or reputed holy place in search of healing. Recall how they visit the so-called burial place of Elijah on Mount Carmel, p. 392.

6. *That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.* It is interesting to recall in connection with the demand put upon the king of Israel that for a long time the kings of England were credited with power to heal scrofula (known in early days as "the King's Evil") by their touch. In the University Library, Cambridge, England, there is a book which contains a picture showing Edward the Confessor touching a scrofulous woman, and one of the treasures of the Library of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Westminster, is "Queen Mary's Manual" in which there is a picture of Queen Mary touching a scrofulous boy. Charles II is said to have touched more than ninety thousand persons in the course of nineteen years, many sufferers going to him from our own land. William III, according to Macaulay, "had too much sense to be duped, and too much honesty to bear a part in what he knew to be an imposture." On one occasion he remarked to an applicant for his healing touch, "God give you better health and more sense." This healing prerogative of the kings died a natural death only on the accession of the House of Hanover.

10. *Seven times.* In this particular the command would probably not seem strange to Naaman. Chaldean magic tablets show that incantations had to be repeated seven times, and Naaman was expecting to be cured in some such way.

13. *If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?* "Would you not? Swung at the end of a pole, with hooks in your back; measured all the way from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, lying down on your face and rising at each length; done a hundred things which heathen and Roman Catholics and unspiritual Protestants think are the way to get salvation?"

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What famous visit was made to a great Hebrew King and what presents did the visitor bring? What king sent a letter for an evil purpose? How were letters written in those days?

Elijah and Elisha. Elisha had the double portion, the elder son's portion, of Elijah's spirit and was the true successor of Elijah, but he was very unlike the greater prophet. As a thoughtful writer has expressed it, "Elisha touched life more frequently than did Elijah. Elijah was the leader for the sudden crisis, with power to make God real when the entire nation had gone wrong or a wicked king had plunged into murder. Elisha touched and was touched by the common distresses of the common people. It is not necessary for the disciple to be an imitation of his master in order to be a disciple. One great peculiarity of the Biblical revelation is the extent to which it leaves the individual men free to be themselves and to cut out their own way."

Elisha's Early Miracles. Elisha's first recorded act was the giving of pure water to the people of Jericho, and "Elisha's Fountain" is still pouring forth sweet water. In the wilderness of Edom the armies of the Kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, who had united their forces to fight the King of Moab, were in distress for want of water. Jehoshaphat appealed to Elisha and he obtained water for them. The freeing of the widow from debt by the filling of many jars with oil from only one, the restoration to life of the Shunammite's son, the rending harmless a mess of poisoned pottage, the feeding of a hundred men with a small amount of food, are told in rapid succession. The events recorded of Elisha cannot be arranged chronologically.

Length and Time of Elisha's Ministry. His ministry extended through the reigns of four kings, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Joash. Because he was on friendly terms with the king of Israel mentioned in our lesson, it is thought that the king must have been Jehoram, who reigned from 851 to 842 B. C.

The Conclusion of Our Lesson. After Naaman had washed in the Jordan and had been cured of his leprosy he returned to Samaria and sought the prophet. "Now I know that there is no God but in Israel," he said, and he offered all his treasures to Elisha. Elisha refused to accept anything; the cure had been wrought by Jehovah whom he served. Naaman then asked that

he might take back with him two loads of earth on which to rear his altar to Jehovah, for he would not henceforth offer sacrifices to Syrian gods; he would be obliged to attend his king when he went to the house of the Syrian god Rimmon to worship, and would have to bow there, but he hoped Jehovah would pardon this. "Go in peace," said the prophet.

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, could not bear to see all that treasure carried back which Elisha had refused. He hastened after Naaman, told him that two prophets had come to see Elisha, and asked for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for them. Naaman pressed upon him double the amount of silver, and sent men back to the house with gifts. When Gehazi appeared in Elisha's presence, Elisha asked him where he had been. "I have been nowhere", Gehazi answered. Then Elisha told him what he had done, reminded him of the visions of wealth and splendor in which he had been indulging, and then pronounced his terrible punishment. Gehazi went out from Elisha's presence a leper as white as snow.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the world. In Naaman's day it was the commercial center of a large district, the center of an immense caravan traffic, famous for its wealth and beauty. The oasis on which it was built was rescued from the surrounding desert by many irrigating canals from the Abana and Pharpar rivers. In the outskirts of the city today there is a collection of stone and mud huts, surrounded by a high wall, known as the Naaman House of Lepers. In my recent visit to Damascus I saw the exterior only, being told by our dragoman that the interior was exceedingly filthy. The huts face a central court and are unfurnished, save for the ragged mats which serve as beds. The lepers are supported by private charities.

The Abana and Pharpar rivers are now called the Barada and Awaj. Both rise in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, at the foot of Mount Hermon. The Awaj is muddy in the latter part of its course, but the Abana is a beautifully clear stream. The hotel where we stayed is on its banks, its clear swift-flowing waters gladdened and refreshed us, and after following its course with its foaming cascades for an hour and a half by train on our way from Damascus to Beyrout we parted from it with regret.

It was a long journey which Naaman took in his chariot from Damascus to Samaria. We may think of him as following the Abana towards its source, then driving down along the Upper Jordan from its source to the Sea of Chinnereth, around the eastern side of that little lake and down the Lower Jordan Valley a short distance, till he crossed the Jordan and went westward through the Valley of Jezreel into Samaria. The question naturally arises, how did he cross the Jordan in his chariot? This is Dr. George Adam Smith's answer: "Till the Romans came there were no bridges in Palestine. Like the name for port, the name for bridge does not occur in the Old Testament, probably because the thing itself was quite unknown. It is unlikely that chariots were driven across the river, for the shallowest ford there is three feet deep, and the bottom very muddy. Either the body of the chariot was floated over as baggage is still floated, by inflated skins, or else such ferry-boats existed as Cæsar found in use on the rivers of Gaul."

An Assyrian in His Chariot

Most striking is the contrast between the Jordan and the Abana. One cannot go from one to the other without thinking Naaman's question justified. The Jordan is a very swift river, the Lower Jordan falling 610 feet in 65 miles, and is therefore loaded with sediment. It is but fair to say, however, that arguing from the fact that oriental pilgrims today are not deterred from bathing in the Jordan—or the Ganges—by their dirt, Naaman may rather

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have connected the Jordan with the God of Israel in thought, and have felt that the gods of his rivers and land were the better.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

This story is the classic instance of fidelity to early memories. It sounds a note of encouragement to those who fear their instruction will be forgotten.

The fundamental mistake which senior and adult pupils are inclined to make in regard to their salvation is that, like Naaman, they want to be healed in their own way. They have preconceived notions of what must first take place before they can expect to attain salvation. Perchance they cannot accept this or that statement about the Bible or in the Bible, and they will take no step in the direction of the Jordan until this difficulty is cleared up. To such God may be saying all the time, yonder is a poor man whom you can help by a visit or a loan; here is a woman who sorely needs your sympathy; next door is a child whom you can influence and turn back from the wrong path in which he has started; you have been cherishing ill-will against this one, forgive him; you are needed as Sunday-school treasurer—take up this task; do this or that small thing and then the next small thing for me, and together we can proceed to greater things, even to a better understanding of the hidden things of the Scriptures. God heals in his own way, and he has different methods for different ones.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

The Second Topic is for your class. Dwell upon the girl's part in the story. The lesson needs little explanation, and it is told with much fulness of detail. Study it as a model, from which you may learn how to tell a story in a dramatically interesting way.

Begin with a picture of the little girl in her own home in Palestine. Let them see her as a happy girl, helping her mother in her work, playing with merry companions, hearing about the great prophet Elisha, and learning to know and worship God. She could not have been very big nor old when the Syrian soldiers came and stole her away. They took her on a long journey. Point it out on the map. Describe the beautiful palace in Damascus to which she was taken a captive, and there given to the mistress of the home as her slave, to wait upon her. Although she sadly missed her own home, the little maid did her best in the place where she was. One day she found her mistress sorrowing and learned that she was grieving because the terrible disease of leprosy had come upon her husband. He was one of the King's bravest soldiers, the leader of his armies.

Tell the whole story, and show how the little maid not only brought about the cure of Naaman but helped him find the true God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. "Now Naaman": who was he? What was his reputation? What victory had he won for his country? Who gave him the victory, according to our text? Did Naaman worship Jehovah? How, then, can it be said that Jehovah gave him the victory? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 398.) There was some one in his home from the land of Israel: who? What was she doing? How did she happen to be there? What did she tell her mistress one day? Who was the prophet? What have we heard before this about Elisha?

For Older Pupils. Jesus emphasized the thought that Elijah's and Elisha's missions were not limited to the Israelites. In his words to his townspeople, in the synagogue at Nazareth, he said: "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a famine over all the land: and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian". Besides being a Syrian and a leper, what else was Naaman?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Lepers

A Lesson from Naaman. "I can never look anyone in the face again!" a girl exclaimed whose brother's terrible disgrace had been made public. "You can't imagine the humiliation, the agony of it all."

"But you cannot always live under this cloud. You have everything to live for—home, education, friends—"

"Yes, I know. Everyone tells me that. But it reminds me of the list of fine things the Bible says about Naaman—and then the awful words, 'But he was a leper!'"

The friend waited a little, and then brought her Bible. "I recently read," she began quietly, "a sermon on that text by a young English minister. Naaman *was* a leper. There was no denying it. But it was not his fault, and partly because of what people knew him to be, and partly because of the qualities that he showed in that terrible experience, he deserves to be highly thought of even apart from his cure. In his home he was still loved, still honored by his servants. He was respected and liked by his soldiers, and welcomed by the king. He was a leper, but he faced the fact, and made the best of what life had for him.

"He was a leper, but he had the confidence of the king. He was honorable, he was a mighty man of valor; and by him God gave deliverance to his nation. What a record that would have been, even if he had never recovered!"

"I never thought of it in that way."

"No. You never needed the lesson till now. You are not a leper. You are a dear, sweet girl; but you must face, in one way or another, this terrible fact. There are various ways in which people meet calamity. Some curse, some rave, some sulk, some lie down supinely and die. Others meet it bravely, and suddenly find that their religion is meant to help them in just such an affliction, and does help them".

"But to think of having to face this all my life!"

"You are not to face it all your life. Little by little, it will drop out of people's minds, and out of your own mind. In time it will be only a sad but subdued memory; a terrible dream. God loves you; your friends love you and trust you. If they knew how, they would make you feel their love even more than they do. Believe in God and your friends, and face the world with courage.

"The way in which Naaman met his terrible sorrow when he had no hope, proved, in a very strange and wonderful manner, the means by which, at last, his healing came." *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

I am Jehovah that Healeth thee. God has his physicians through whom he heals today, even as once he healed Naaman through his prophet Elisha. One of the world's greatest heroes is Dr. George Turner, who was recently knighted by King George for his conspicuous services to humanity. During the Boer War he was instrumental in helping to check the ravages of typhoid. Then he turned his attention and skill to the leper asylum at Pretoria. "He gave up all his spare time to work among the lepers", says the London *Times,* "doing all he could to alleviate their lot, and prosecuting a tireless research into the nature of the disease. For three years he labored at this work without extra pay of any sort. He saw the lepers early in the morning, and again when he came home in the evening. Saturday and Sunday he gave to them entirely. In addition to this he made as many *post mortem* examinations as possible in his laboratory, rising at dawn in order to have time for the work." Dr. Turner then returned to England to continue his bacteriological researches. Next a sad day came when he noticed white spots on his hands—he himself had contracted the dread disease. Now he is living in absolute seclusion, suffering a living death in martydom to God's great cause of medical science.

Over on the island of Molokai, where we have a leper colony, there lives an American who took up Father Damien's work when he died so heroically. For twenty-five years "Brother Dutton", as he is called, (Ira Dutton Jones of Vermont) has stayed there and managed the affairs of the colony. Like Sir George Turner he made the great sacrifice and faces the same fate.

Now I Know that there is No God in All the Earth but Jehovah. From *The Congregationalist* comes this account of Yee Sui, the leper, who lives in a shack under the shadow of the Municipal Hospital, on a rocky crag two hundred feet above the level of Pittsburgh.

A few months ago he was a devout worshipper of his ancestral gods, but when the great affliction came upon him, Yee Sui found that his father's gods were helpless to meet his dire needs. Then it was that the faithful missionary, Yee Tang, found him and told him of the faith that had become to him better than anything his fathers knew. The result was that just about a year ago, Dr. G. W. Shelton of the Second Presbyterian Church stood in the biting wind on that desolate height, on the steps of the leper home, and baptized this Chinaman into the Christian faith. And he has found comfort and grace to meet the sorrows and loneliness of his lot. Once a month the missionary, Yee Tang, comes with the sacred elements of the communion, the bread and wine; but even he must set them down by the steps and Yee Sui must wait until he has retired a safe distance before he partakes, while Yee Tang repeats the simple ritual. This church has services every Sunday afternoon. Yee Sui is the only worshipper. The service is aided by a phonograph and a Bible in the Chinese language. After a hymn from the phonograph, Yee Sui takes his Chinese Bible and reads aloud many passages very earnestly. There is a pause, then rises the voice of prayer. The words are strange, but they are spoken in the spirit of faith and deep devotion. When the prayer ceases, the chords of the phonograph sound again and the words so dear to sorely tried and needy Christian hearts float out of the strange temple, on the high rock above the careless city in the valley below—

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.

Then the service, so pathetic yet so triumphant, is over.

What are You doing for Lepers? Mr. W. M. Danner, Secretary U. S. A. Committee of The Mission to Lepers, has an account in *The Sunday-School Times* of his visit to a town in Kansas of only eleven hundred people. At four services held on Sunday, he told his story of the great need of the lepers, but did not ask for money. "The people know that twenty-five dollars will support a leper for a year in one of the mission stations," his hostess told him, " but we want them to become interested in knowing how much relief from suffering is given, and how the food, and the clothing and the shelter, and the Christian teaching, and the sympathy bring cheer and comfort to the sick, poor, homeless outcasts."

At the close of the evening service Mr. Danner was greatly surprised to be told that $225 had been raised, enough to support nine lepers. "We are disappointed; we hoped to get complete support for ten lepers," they told him.

Then Mr .Danners tells us how Wilbur Chapman, a small boy, is raising a pig which he hopes to sell for enough money to support the tenth leper. Here is a letter which Wilbur wrote: "The children are all helping to feed 'the leper pig' and the men are greatly interested. A man carried a pail of swill three blocks this morning to feed him. I have named him Pete. Pete was asleep this morning, and I slipped up beside him, and got my hands on him, and his flesh feels good and solid, and this means a heavy weight. I am sure I shall soon be able to sell him for enough money to support mother's tenth leper."

The afternoon after Mr. Danners told the story at an office prayer-meeting of *The Sunday School Times* there appeared in their office a bank in the form of a pig, labelled "Pete No. 2" and this porker is fed 'corn-in-the-back' instead of 'corn-in-the-ear', and in due time they expect Pete No. 2 will be heavy enough to support a leper also.

Don't you want to have a hand in this good work? It is now October 17th, and you still have time to help bring good cheer at Christmas to many lepers. The Department for Utilizing Surplus Material, of the World's Sunday-School Association, makes a special effort to send pictures to every leper home that is known. Have you not bright pictures to send? They should be sent on their way early in November. A letter with enclosed stamp and your own

denomination stated ("North" or "South" if your denomination has the two branches), sent to Dr. Samuel D. Price, Metropolitan Tower, New York City, will gain for you all the necessary information.

There are many other ways in which you can begin now to plan to make Christmas happy for those less fortunate than yourselves.

II Little Helpers

What a Little Indian Maid Accomplished. See that Indian Guru on the roadside! The whole country-side know him as "Vithoba's Pilgrim," for in search of spiritual peace he has wandered from one shrine to another covering great distances in Western India. Today he is in Kolhapur. Sitting, tailor-like, on a tiger-skin, without clothing, save a loin-cloth and a string of beads, he is reading aloud his Mantras, or religious Hindu books. In an hour or so the sun will be at its fiercest. Then Guru's hair, the growth of years, nearly two yards long, bound round his head, will be his protection. There he sits and receives the pious homage of passers-by, for he is the personification of the highest Hindu ideals.

Let loose from school, a tiny girl bounds up to the Guru. She hears him read of over three hundred millions of gods, and at once says: "That is not true, there is but one God." An uneven dialogue ensues, and it is punctuated by the little Marathi lass giving him her booklet, which tells of another Guru, Jesus.

It is a long and thrilling story: the after-life of Guru. The Nazarene conquered! Satoba Ranoji Ranbhise became, not only a Christian convert, but a most effective Christian pastor. In a single decade of work he gathered out of Hinduism a church of three hundred adult converts and three hundred and fifty baptized children. Referring to his Guru life before the small girl arrested him he said: "It was like attempting to grasp at a fistful of water—nothing remained in the grasp after all the effort." In Jesus he found a Savior, who made Satoba, in turn, a Christian Guru of his own generation. A little child shall lead them. *Quoted* in *Sunday-School Chronicle.*

A Twelve Year Old Missionary. In the Methodist Times of England Mrs. Chievers tells about a surprising discovery made by Dr. Moffatt, the African missionary and father-in-law of Livingstone. She heard it from Dr. Moffatts' own lips. When travelling far into the interior, he came upon a tree upon which a board was fixed, conveying the information that a Christian school was to be found in the village not far away. He was amazed, for he believed himself to be the first white man visiting that region. Making his way towards the village, he met a little native girl about twelve years of age, to whom he said: "I saw a board fastened on a tree saying that there was a Christian school held in the village; would you be so good as to lead me to the teacher?" The little girl hung her head shyly and made no reply. "Do you know the teacher?" he next asked. She replied this time with an affirmative nod. "Well who *is* the teacher?" he persisted. Looking up into his face now but still shyly she answered, "I am the teacher!" Dr. Moffatt discovered that the girl had once been taken to a distant tribe, where she heard a missionary tell the people of the love of Jesus; she had now become the first missionary to her own people.

Life is a Great Bundle of Small Things and not a Little Bundle of Great Things.

Because you cannot hold
The firmament's huge weight,
Like Atlas in the legend old,
Why so disconsolate?
You surely can lift up a little cup,
And some poor thirsty one shall drink it up.

Julia H. May.

III. Some Great Thing

The Lesson Naaman Learned. How plainly we can see this great man, Naaman, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian armies, coming in all his pomp and splendor to the humble door of Elisha the prophet and expecting to be treated "like a great man that happened to be a leper, while Elisha treated him

like a leper who happened to be a great man!" He was angry because Elisha sent directions to him by a messenger instead of coming out to see himself, and because the directions were so simple. Physicians to-day tell a patient that all he needs is regular exercise and diet and sleep, and the patient, like Naaman, is wroth. Behold I thought, he says, that he would give me powerful medicines, order me to see some noted specialist, or prescribe a trip to some foreign baths, and he tells me to walk and eat and sleep! And he, too, goes away in a rage.

My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? With this question Naaman's attendants bring him to his senses. He has already done the great thing, he has taken the long journey to see the prophet—and has brought many thousands of dollars with which to pay for his cure; now let him try the simple thing that Elisha orders, and go and wash in the Jordan seven times.

A Young Man's Lesson. "Isn't it a grind, Phil?" asked one member of a college glee-club of another, as told in *The Youth's Companion.* "I don't see how you can give up your Sunday afternoons to that mission."

"It is exacting", replied Phil, "and at first I thought it a burden, but to tell the truth I've come to like it."

"Oh, I don't doubt it does good, but the thing that would trouble me most would be the character of their music—that cheap, commonplace sort of stuff, you know."

"Well", said Phil, "it isn't classic, I know, but it seems to be the kind that reaches those men and does them good, so I go ahead."

"I wonder at it, Phil, for your taste isn't of that sort."

Phil was silent a moment, and then, with heightened color and a lower tone, he said: "I'll tell you what helped me to get over that. You know Prof. Mason? Well, he plays for them. That man has won honors at the conservatories abroad, and his appreciation of good music is as much finer than mine as mine is than some of the men in the mission. He goes down there Sunday afternoons, after playing that magnificent organ at Grace Church in the morning, and sits down at that old pan of a piano, and plays those tinkling, cheap, revival hymns, and puts his whole heart into it. I had some fine ideas about the sacredness of art and all that, and was tempted not to go there and sing; but when I saw that man and heard him there, I gave it up. If he can stand it for the sake of the good he is doing, I guess I can."

And so Phil sang on. No one who knew him ever suspected that he had lost his love of good music. On the other hand, there crept into his work in the glee-club a certain richness that had not been there before. "I've learned something about putting my heart into the song", he explained modestly, when a friend asked him about it."

A Man's Lesson. "I have come to see you," he said, "about a class of boys in the Sunday-school. They have recently lost their teacher, and I wish you would take them." Thus a minister spoke to Judge Andrews, the most learned lawyer in the State.

"What! I take a class of boys in the Sunday-school!"

"Yes, sir. You could hold the boys. They all respect you greatly. You have no idea what a hero you are to them."

"But—but—I teach a class of boys! No, no, I could not! It's a very busy term of court."

"But, it is the busy people, judge, who do the best work, and we need a splendid teacher for that class. Won't you try it?"

"Couldn't think of it No, no, I couldn't possibly." And the judge closed the interview rather abruptly.

But Sunday morning the minister was surprised to receive a call from Judge Andrews. He began with strange hesitation: "I have called to say that—I would try that class. I thought it all out after you left. It was sheer pride that made me refuse. I thought I was too great a man to teach a class of little boys. I tell you, sir, I am a hypocrite. I have tried to play the 'distinguished Christian gentleman', and I have been worthless in the Kingdom. Put me to work. I do not know how to teach little boys. I am too ignorant. But I mean to learn."

At the close of his first year in the Sunday-school, Judge Andrews said to the

minister: "Teaching that class has been the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I never had any definition of service before. I shall never cease to thank God for opening my eyes to see myself as I really was." *Youth's Companion.*

THE LESSON'S MEANING FOR US.

Naaman learned the wisdom of obeying the will of God as declared by the prophet: have we learned the wisdom of obeying his will as declared by his Son? Naaman learned that God's blessing comes as a free gift, it cannot be bought: "'Tis only Heaven can be had for the asking." Leprosy is a symbol of sin: in the curing of Naaman we see that greater miracle, the cleansing of all sin by Jesus Christ.

Our Prayer: O God of Israel and of all the world, on this great day of prayer for Sunday-schools we ask thy help in making thy children everywhere live as well according to their light and knowledge of thee as did that little captive maiden of Damascus according to hers in the long ago. And as the chain of prayer today encircles the globe may there not be lacking in each one's heart the honest purpose to do his utmost in helping to an understanding of thy great love and power those who, like Naaman, have yet no knowledge of thee, nor of how Jesus Christ came to earth to cleanse us all from the leprosy of sin. In his name we pray.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Preconceived notions as to the way in which God must work.
2. Leper missions. First Topic.
3. Divine Compassion for the heathen. Recall Jesus' reference to this incident, spoken in the synagogue at Nazareth: There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet: and none of them were cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.
4. Keeping help in the home: treating maids as human beings, not as drudges. See "The Saints in my Kitchen", *Outlook,* Feb. 17, 1912; "The Experiences of a Hired Girl", *Outlook,* April 6, 1912; "The Hired Girl Problem", *Outlook,* Sept. 14, 1912; "Both Sides of the Servant Question", *Atlantic Monthly,* April, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who were the kings of Syria and Israel mentioned? (*Guide,* p. 408.) 2. Where is Dothan? 3. What event in patriarchal history occurred at Dothan? (Gen. 37.17-28.) 4. When before did Elisha behold horses and chariots of fire? 5. Read the thirty-fourth Psalm, Jehovah a Provider and Deliverer, and commit to memory verse 7. 6. What did Paul say in his letter to the Romans that recalls the sixteenth verse of our lesson? (Romans 8.31.) 7. In what words did Hezekiah utter the thought of verse 16? (2 Ch. 32.7, 8.) 8. When Jesus was arrested what heavenly defense did he say he might have if he wished? (Mt. 26.53.) 9. In what words did Lincoln express his belief in our invisible ally? (*Guide,* p. 414.) 10. What became of the Syrians who surrounded Dothan? (2 K. 6.18-23.) 11. What later events in Elisha's life are recorded? (*Guide,* p. 409.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What does the phrase "in such and such a place" mean? 2. Who was "the man of God"? Why was he so called? 3. What would we say instead of "not once nor twice", verse 10? 4. For what was "the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber" a proverbial expression? 5. Why did the king of Syria ask the question recorded in verse 11? 6. What event in Christ's life is recalled by the sending of a great host to capture one man? (Mt. 26.47.) 7. Along what plain did the Syrians drive to Dothan? 8. Did the servant of Elisha see actual horses and chariots of fire? 9. Of what were they a symbol? 10. What did Jacob see at Bethel which assured him of God's presence with him? 11. What for us corresponds to the horses and chariots round about Elisha? (*Guide,* p. 411.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Read Whittier's "Legend of St. Mark", and commit to memory the last five stanzas. In your Life of Elisha write an account of Elisha's Healing of Naaman's Leprosy.

LESSON IV—OCTOBER 24

ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS

Golden Text

The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, And delivereth them. Psalm 34.7

LESSON II Kings 6.8-23: verses 8-17 printed MEMORIZE verses 16, 17

8 Now the king of Syria was warring against Israel; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11 And the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, Nay, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *The king of Syria.* Probably Ben-hadad II.—*Was warring against Israel.* Whether before or after the cure of Naaman we do not know.—*In such and such a place.* In a definitely named place. *Camp.* Or, *encampment,* RVm.

9. *The man of God.* Elisha.—*Beware that thou pass not such a place.* Naming some definite place. According to Josephus, the king of Israel was starting for a hunt when he received Elisha's warning.

10. *The king of Israel.* Probably Jehoram.—*Not once nor twice.* Several times.

11. *Sore troubled.* "He lost courage" (*Luther*).—*This thing.* The betrayal of his plans.—*Which of us is for the king of Israel?* He thought there must be a traitor within his own ranks, some one whom he had been trusting.

12. *Elisha the prophet.* His fame extended even into Syria.

13. *That I may send and fetch him.* He seems to think that Elisha knows his plans against the king but will not know them against himself.

14. *Therefore sent he thither a great host.* This recalls the multitudes who came to take Jesus, Mt. 26.17.

17. *They came by night.* "In all parts of the east the sudden raids, which are so characteristic of oriental warfare, generally take place at night and under cover of the darkness" (*Tristram*).

16. *Fear not, for.* "The true and only conqueror of reasonable fear is still more reasonable trust" (*Maclaren*). Compare Hezekiah's words to the people, 2 Ch. 32.7, 8. Compare also Num. 14,9; Ps. 27.3; 56.3; Rom. 8.31.

17. *Jehovah, I pray thee.* "Man has always the source of infinite power, if he knows God well enough and confidently enough to ask for that power" (*E. E. Hale*). —*Open his eyes.* Let him have a vision of our defense.

> "Open our eyes and make us see
> The path that leads to Heaven and thee!" (*John Hay*).

—*The mountain.* The hill on which Dothan was built. Full of horses and chariots

of fire. The vision was a symbol of the reality. See ¶ 7, p. 411. "In the Old Testament the protection and deliverance of the saints are chiefly considered as being effected by external defences and agents. Horses and chariots of fire constitute the bodyguard of the good. In the New Testament the secret of salvation is placed within the soul. 'He that is in you is more than he that is in the world.' A pure heart is better than walls of granite and gates of brass. Faith and hope and love are the true chariots of fire. Noble deeds are angelic squadrons. God about me; God within me; who, what, can hurt or destroy?" (*Watkinson*).—"The higher nature through some of its deep needs or lofty impulses is always trying to open the eyes of our lower and despondent nature to see the divine and hopeful powers which are at work upon our life" (*Phillips Brooks*).—*Round about Elisha.* The Lord is round about his people, Ps. 125.2. See also Ps. 34.7; 91.4.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When have we heard about chariots of fire and horsemen? What did the one who saw them say about them, and what did he mean? In what lesson have we seen the truth of the statement that "Greater is he that is for us than they that are against us"?

Elisha as Statesman. Several instances of Elisha's helpfulness to individuals are recorded. Now we see that he was a power in the political and military affairs of his country.

Elisha Sought by an Army. Syria was bent on subjugating Israel. Before attacking Samaria, the capital, a series of preliminary skirmishes was made only to be thwarted. The king's suspicions were aroused. There must be a traitor in his own camp, who made his plans known to the enemy. He was told that it was Elisha, the prophet of Israel, who revealed his plans. Elisha was at Dothan, and the Syrians at once sent a great army to capture him. Under cover of night they surrounded the hill on which lay Dothan, and in the early morning a young man who served Elisha discovered them. Panic-stricken he rushed to Elisha exclaiming, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" "Fear not," Elisha calmly answered, "for they that are with us are more than they that are with them." Then Elisha besought God to open the young man's eyes that he might see their heavenly defenders. The young man's eyes were opened and he saw a vision of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. Then Elisha prayed that the Syrians might be smitten with blindness. He went to them and bidding them follow he led them to Samaria. There their eyes were opened and they found themselves in the power of the Israelites. Elisha prevented the King of Israel from putting them to death, and after having them royally feasted he sent them back to Damascus.

The note of time is vague. We may assume that it was in the latter part of Jehoram's reign.

The Last Years of Elisha's Life. As this is our last lesson about Elisha, let us see what the record says about the remainder of his life. Despite the remarkable relief of Dothan, the Syrians later besieged Samaria and occasioned great distress to its people from famine. Jehoram, the king, did that which was evil; perhaps this was his punishment. When he held Elisha responsible for the state of affairs and sent a messenger to kill him, Elisha foretold immediate relief. And it came to pass. The Syrians, thinking that the Hittites and Egyptians had been hired to attack them, fled in a panic. Four lepers made the amazing discovery of their flight, and reported it to the incredulous king.

Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-hadad, who was sick, sent his servant Hazael to learn whether he would recover. Elisha told Hazael that his master would recover from his disease, but would surely die, and that he, Hazael, would do much evil to Israel. Hazael told Ben-hadad that he would get well, then smothered him with the coverlet of his bed, and made himself king.

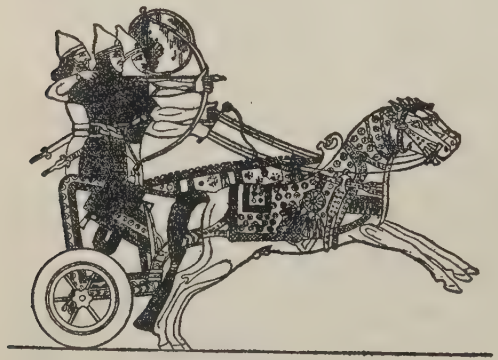
While Jehu was in command of the forces besieging Ramoth-Gilead, Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to anoint him king, thus carrying out the commission which Elijah received, 1 K. 19.16.

When Elisha, at an advanced age, lay on his deathbed, Joash was king of Israel. The king wept at the thought of Elisha's departing, saying, as Elisha had of Elijah, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Through three long distracting reigns, in the words of Dr. George Adam Smith, the prophet Elisha, genuine borderman as he was, expert in camp-life, ambush

and scouting, inspired with political foresight, was also the moral stay and inspiration of his broken people, in truth the very chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Dothan was twelve miles north of Samaria on the caravan route between Damascus and Egypt. It was on a small hill which could be easily surrounded by the Syrian army. The only other mention of Dothan in the Old Testament is in Gen. 37.17-28; there Joseph's brothers conspired against him and sold him to the Ishmaelites who carried him into Egypt.



Assyrian War Chariot

Ben-hadad could easily drive with his host of chariots over the open Plain of Esdraelon. "The openness of Samaria is her most prominent feature, and tells most in her history," writes Dr. George Adam Smith. "Few invaders were successfully resisted. One very interesting effect of her openness is the frequency with which the chariot appears in her history. In the annals of Judah chariots are but seldom mentioned. All the long drives of the Old Testament are in Samaria,—the race of Ahab against the storm from Mount Carmel to Jezreel; his long funeral in his battle-stained chariot stained with his life-blood; the drive of Jehu from Ramoth-Gilead; the chariot race between Jehu and poor Ahaziah; Jehu's drive again from Jezreel to Samaria; and the long drive of Naaman from Damascus to the house of Elisha, presumably at Samaria, and the drive back again."

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The Rev. W. Charter Piggott calls this scene a parable of our work as Sunday-school teachers, which may serve to set before us an educational ideal. Here are some of his thoughts for you to ponder. Studies in the psychology of the child or in the principles and art of teaching, much as they may instruct us, do not contain, and cannot reveal, the aims and objects of our work. We are not Christian teachers unless we are equipped with a clear vision of our religious aims. Let us look for a moment at Elisha as a religious educationalist. He and this youth sat side by side in the clear morning light, but their visions were different. The youth saw everything that the natural eye could reveal to him. Elisha saw everything he saw, but he saw something else. His spiritual eye was open, and with the eye of his soul he saw God. He lived in the great realm of the Divine presence, and he looked at this young man beside him, and yearned sympathetically to enlighten him. He wanted him to be very sure of God, to look out upon life with open eyes to its spiritual meaning, to have that supreme vision that makes all things different and sets him in a new world. And you Sunday-school teachers, will you remember that your real strength is just here, in the cultivation of the inward reality of your faith, and in the possession of a thought of God that really makes life different for you? If you have this, you will want to open the eyes of the children to see what you see; and if you have a growing vision you will always have something to teach. Elisha wanted to teach this youth to see what he saw; but he did not open the eyes of this young man. He could not. That was beyond the power of Elisha. And it is a task beyond your power. Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes"; and it was God who gave the youth the vision. The best, the vital part of all our work is prayer. Alone we cannot do the work that we would—to open the eyes of the children that they may see God in life and life in God. That is our driving task, but it is only to be wrought out with prayer.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Tell the entire story, including how Elisha led the enemy to Samaria, would not let the king of Israel put the Syrians to death, but had them sent back home to Damascus. As you tell the story, put a dot on the board to represent Dothan and Elisha (as some one else has suggested). "Draw a circle around it to represent the army of the Syrians. There is no way of escape. Next draw a heavier circle within the first, and then teach that when our eyes are opened, we can see the great encampment of the Angel of the Lord between ourselves and the danger." Explain our Golden Text, adapting to your pupil's minds Bishop Brooks' words, below. Give Mr. Gillie's talk, p. 412.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSONS

For Younger Pupils. "Why can't we see God if he is here?" a little girl once asked her father. "What do you think is the reason?" her father asked in return. "I guess it's because we haven't the right kind of eyes," she said thoughtfully, and then added, "We get a different kind of eyes when we die, don't we?"

Must we wait till we die before we see God in the sense that we are aware of his presence? It is not that we haven't the right kind of eyes for this kind of sight, but that we do not make the right use of the eyes we have, if we can not repeat believingly the words of our Golden Text. What are they? Tell me how the truth of this thought was made clear to a young man in Dothan, and then we will see how it can be made clear to us here in —.

For Older Pupils. If we had a fuller record of Elisha's long life, we should see, I think, that his deeds of kindness to individuals here and there, which the Bible records, were but incidental acts wrought in the midst of grave cares of state. Today we have our last lesson about him, and it gives us a glimpse of his share in national affairs.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Invisible Spiritual Realities

Invisible but Real. *Invisible* spiritual realities—are there any other? And they are none the less real for being invisible. The young man whose eyes Elisha opened saw that, knew that they were more powerful than the human foes, believed and took courage. This is the essence of the story, and this is the experience that may come to every one of us.

What are the genuine realities that answer to the horses and chariots which the young man saw when his eyes were opened? We will let one of the most practical as well as spiritual of counsellors (Phillips Brooks) answer, condensing here his words:

When we speak of our spiritual helpers, we mean most of all those actually existant beings, those persons living a higher life than ours, whose life is capable of teaching ours and aiding it, the knowledge of whose existence and whose readiness to help us makes us more brave to face the dangers that we meet with because we are not facing them alone. Of all such beings, whether they be only one or multitudes, who can be made known to us, one stands above all others, one stands eternally alone, because all others get whatever help they have to give us primarily from him; they are his instruments and ministers. That one is God. The true unveiling of the human eye, the true sight that gives courage to a human heart, is the sight of the Divine Father standing above all our struggling life, looking down into it with love, with pity, and ready to strike down our enemies the moment they grow too strong for us. A soul which comes to the sight of a Father and knows that it is not fighting alone but that God watches and works for it above, is as the bewildered soldier looking up out of the dust and smoke and blood, and seeing his captain standing calm and watchful up there where he can survey the whole field and manage the whole battle.

This is the wonder of the life of Jesus Christ. What made that Humanity so brave and strong? Was it not this, that it was always seeing God? We think it strange that Jesus could stand so bravely before the Pharisees and the Romans and feel no fear. Was it strange if his Father were closer to him than the Romans and Pharisees all the while and hid them from him; if the trumpets and the chariots

upon the mountain were so loud in his ears that he could not hear the clatter of the hosts upon the plain? Our Pharisees are so much nearer and clearer to us than our Father! The secret of courage is so simple after all.

But let us be a little more definite. There is a figurative element in the expression "seeing God." Let us see what it is. To see God, I think, may be separated into these three elements. First, it is to recognize his character as the ruling law of the universe. The qualities of God we know. They are involved in our very conception of him. He is righteous, just, loving, true, pure. Now when your eyes are opened, you see these Divine principles running everywhere. God is everywhere. And seeing them you see God.

And, secondly, seeing God is to see God's purposes in everything. The two are one in essence, but different in apprehension. But when your world opens to you as a plan of God, when all existence is vocal with his meanings, when his intentions thread the universe, so that he who reads human progress, in its largeness or its littleness, reads God's will; that, again, is seeing God.

And still more to see God is to be conscious of our own spiritual relations to him, to know as a comfort and a motive that he loves us, to be surrounded with his companionship, to find that what we do depends not merely upon what he is but upon his being present with us; in a word, to love our Father with an active love—that is a life for which the devout soul find no adequate description but that it is "seeing God." This, then, is what we mean by "seeing God." It is to have the whole world as we think of it, as we live in it, full of his character, his purposes, and his love.

God is a little like the Sun. Look up at the sun. You know it is far away—over ninety-five millions of miles away. Just because it is so far off it can shine in England and Scotland and France and Germany and America all at the same time. And when we do not see it, China and India are rejoicing in its light and heat. Thus there is one thing that is the same to the little Chinese boys and to the Hindu children, to Karl and Max in Dresden, and to Jean and François in Marseilles, to all the young Americans, and to all the little people in England. The sun is the one thing that they all have in common. If a Hindu boy came to England, the grass and flowers and birds would be different. The houses and dresses and conveyances would be different. The very stars would be different. The only thing which he had seen every day in India and could see again in England would be the sun.

And the sun which shines on everybody seems quite near to us. When you wake in the morning and draw the curtain the beams leap in through the window and you feel they have come to visit you. Hold your cheek towards the sun, and you feel it warm, just as if you sat a yard from a fire and let it warm you. The sun is just as much yours as the tree that is five yards from your door, or the hill that rises behind your town. He is far away, and yet he is quite near. You feel him to be quite near, do you not?

God is a little like the sun. He is far away but he is able to see and care for everyone. He is also quite near, closer than anyone else. His love and tenderness and holiness are really as near to you as the sunshine. *Rev. R. C. Gillie* in *Little Sermons.*

Lo, I am with You Alway. Here are two glasses of water which look just alike. (One contains a little nitrate of silver.) You cannot tell that there is any difference between them; yet there is a difference, although you cannot detect it. I will drop a pinch of salt into one, and then you will see how unlike they are. You notice a white cloud forming, which is called a precipitation.

I put the same amount into the other glass, and it does not change it. The reason why the salt produces the white precipitation in the first glass is because there was in the water the chemical called nitrate of silver; the salt made its presence known to us. The silver was there before we put the salt into the glass but we could not see it; our eyes were not able to detect its presence.

There are many things which exist in the world which our eyes are not sufficiently powerful to behold. In this we are like the disciples who were walking to Emmaus. Jesus drew near and walked and talked with them, and they knew him not. At the end of the journey their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.

He has left us the promise, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. He draws near to us, and walks with us; but we are not able to see him any more than our eyes could detect the silver in the glass of water. By

and by our eyes will be opened to see; so we should trust and love him now. *C. H. Tyndall,* in *Object-Lessons for Children.*

II Opened Eyes

It is Easier to See Nothing than to See God. The easy thing is, to go by the senses, to go by the first appearance of things. Since the unseen world is not as plain as a stone wall, the easy thing is to deny that there is any unseen world. The hard thing surely, the thing which implies a certain personal distinction and peculiarity, is to see God, and to hear in the midst of the world's din the whisper of his inviolable will. Faith is surely harder than sight, and bears witness to a finer and more delicate perception. It is easier to build a fence than to write a poem. It is easier to paint a wall than to paint a picture. It is easier to be engaged in the business of the world—its eating and drinking and its pleasures—than to feel the power and summons of that other world of which the best souls are aware. It is easier to see nothing than to see God. Fifty men, a thousand men, can walk over the fields in the evening, for one who, as he walks, can feel what Wordsworth felt when he wrote the lines on Tintern Abbey. And which of them was right? The fifty men who saw nothing, or Wordsworth who saw God; the fifty men who felt nothing, or Wordsworth who "felt the Presence which disturbs us with the joy of elevated things, the sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean, and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man"? *John A. Hutton,* in *The Fear of Things.*

Men and Women of Splendid Vision. In the sunless deeps are animals with eyes of extraordinary size. And the marvelous thing is that these particular creatures have, in a high degree, the power of manufacturing their own light, and the economizing of the delicate phosphorescence has developed in them eyes of remarkable magnitude and power. With their self-created luminousness these abyssal fish withstand the blackness of their environment, and indirectly the darkness has secured for them eyes far more splendid than those of their shallow-water relatives. Thus is it in the abyss in which we live, and which proves to so many a gulf of dark despair. There are thousands of noble men and women with splendid eyes. They see God as clearly as any angel in heaven can see him; they behold his government over them, causing all things to work together for their good; they view the golden consummation to which the universe tends. The very darkness that presses upon them has taught them the secret of making light in themselves, and it has developed in them a power of vision that pierces to the heart of things. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in a *Sermon.*

The Great Revealer of the Spiritual World. Christ speaks the language of faith, the language of one who knows the invisible world. and men begin to open their eyes and look about them and see that there is an invisible world. As a mother says to her child, still sleeping and apparently just opening its eyes: "Listen, and you can hear the singing of birds," and the child, awakening, hears the singing of birds outside, so Christ said to men, just awakening from their sleep, "Hark!" and men listened and heard the voices which they might have heard before had they but hearkened before. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life that Really Is.*

Opened Eyes a Necessity on the Mission Field. No man would last in a Mission Field twenty-four hours who sees only with his eyes. The horizon is banked with difficulties. Everywhere obstacles are sky high. All around are hate, ignorance, sin, the rule and riot of sensualism. To one who stops with the sight, this is bound to be discouraging. He must look beyond and see with his soul and catch the vision of the chariots of the Lord. Then victory is sure. *James J. Vance,* in *Tendency.*

Lord, That I May Receive My Sight. The oldest and wisest of us go through life like the blind child, never seeing the hand of him who sets the sun to light our steps, who feeds us day by day, who makes ready a home for us hereafter.

But this blindness of soul, whatever men may say about it, is not beyond a cure. We have but to seek the Great Physician, crying with one of old, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" At his touch our darkness will vanish and with the new light we shall find ourselves in a new world. Then like the happy French child, we shall be ready to exclaim, "To think that I had this Father so many years and never knew him!" *Youth's Companion.*

III Our Great Ally

Our Unfailing Source of Power. Dr. W. L. Watkinson is famous for his "scientific illustrations." He did not have our lesson text in mind when he wrote the following, but it aptly illustrates the thought which Elisha's servant grasped:—

One of the greatest of chemical discoverers, M. Berthelot, pressed on the attention of scientists the question of the possibility of tapping the central heat of the earth, and making use of it as a perennial source of energy. If this should ever come to pass there will be power enough for all possible purposes. But revelation shows a far grander thing: it shows how the central blue has been tapped, and how the fulness of the heavenly power has become available for the moral uses of man. Let me not, then, faint. With the power of Christ perfected in my weakness, I am equal to every temptation, competent for every duty, equipped for every struggle, the master of every fear.

Lincoln's Belief in the Great Ally. Lincoln knew that a regiment, believing in slavery, might overcome another regiment defending liberty, but Lincoln steadily insisted, and tried to crowd upon men's consciences his conviction, that there is an invisible force more powerful than cannon and guns. Therefore, he kept calling his friends privately and the nation publicly to prayer, to this end, "That God, through the influence of his Holy Spirit, may subdue the anger which has produced and so long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion. To change the hearts of the insurgents, to visit with tender care and consolation those who through the vicissitudes of marches, voyages, battles and sieges have been brought to suffer in mind, body or estate, and finally to lead the whole nation, through the paths of repentance and submission to the Divine Will, back to the perfect enjoyment of Union and fraternal peace." Lincoln shared with other men high and intellectual traits and gifts, but he differed from many other great men in his faith in God, his practice of God's presence, and his confidence in prayer. *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis* in *All the Year Round.*

In the Siege of Peking. As an example of the steadfast, patient courage of a handful against a host, of the abundant use of limited resources, of the bravery of men and the fortitude of women, of unlimited trust in God, and of the great deliverance wrought by him against all human probabilities, it is a story which the world will not willingly let die.

There were three thousand persons to be fed during the siege, exclusive of the many hundred marines. It was inherently improbable that any considerable food supply could be obtained for a siege of unknown duration, yet in a grain shop on Legation Street were discovered between one hundred and two hundred tons of wheat. The fuel supply was absolutely unlimited, though had it been absent nothing could have taken its place. The besiegers had well designed plans to burn the British Legation by the spread of fires set on the outside. Of these attacks three were fierce, persistent and dangerous in the extreme, yet in the end they not only all failed, but left the besieged in each case in a stronger position than before. More than once the wind suddenly veered about, preventing what appeared to be imminent destruction.

It has been estimated that between a million and a half and two million bullets were discharged. Careful count shows the number of shells and shots fired at all the legation during the siege to be about twenty nine hundred. The overcrowding was excessive, the conditions most unwholesome; orientals are indifferent to sanitary restrictions. Whooping cough, measles, typhoid and scarlet fevers, as well as small pox, were all experienced during the siege by both foreigners and Chinese, but there was no contagion to speak of, and no epidemic.

In all these things the hand of God in the siege of Peking was most manifest, and a deliverance was wrought which was quite as marvelous as the deliverance of Elisha. *Under Marching Orders*, quoted in *Kingdom Comments.*

How Gain This Ally? If the hearts of all those who want more of the heavenly vision and power should be revealed, we would stand amazed at their number. I believe that there are very few who do not have beneath their superficial manner, certainly in their more serious moments, a real desire to be better and do better. They would like to draw some of the heavenly forces to their aid. How is the power brought into service? The answer is: "And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee to open his eyes." Prayer; and yet I do not understand by this merely formal verbal prayer. In it is first the upward look, the heavenly determination in life and hope. Let a man realize ever so vividly the danger of the temptations

about him, and if he have no desire for strength of character he is helpless. Here is the crucial point. We want the heavenly forces to back us. Have we the determination to drag them down to our aid? Have we the patience to frame our thoughts and lives so that we can call them? In other words, if you want to keep pure and true, if you want to have the strength to meet temptation, you must do as in everything else, keep on the alert for it: form habits which will help you towards it.

Pray when and where you will, but pray as a habit. The heavenly eye must be kept trained and adjusted to heavenly visions if it would gain anything from them. *Bishop William Lawrence.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Ampere was led by a friend to try his eye-glasses, when to the latter's surprise the great electrician burst into tears. Ampere had not known before that he was near-sighted, and the sudden realization of what beauty and interest he had missed all his life was most overwhelming. Are we perhaps as ignorant of spiritual near-sightedness?

When we pass from the bright sunlight into a darkened room we can at first see little, but gradually the pupils of our eyes enlarge until what was invisible becomes visible. As with the physical, so may it be with the spiritual sight, the power of spiritual vision will enlarge if we live up to the faith we have.

His angels shall keep thee in all thy ways. It may be his will that his followers are safely kept in times of physical danger: it is his will that they are kept in security in times of spiritual perils.

Our Prayer: O Christ, thou great Revealer of God, open our eyes that we may see him. Make us alive to the higher and deeper realities of life, and then we shall take courage and be strong to meet all that awaits us. Say to us as thou didst to blind Bartimæus of old, Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee. And may we in our measure be Elishas to those whose eyes are still holden, helping to open their eyes so that they may see in thee their Saviour and ever present Helper.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

The essence of the story, the reality of unseen spiritual forces. See all three topics; also "Men of Vision," in *The Chautauquan* for Jan., 1908.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who was the first king of Judah? 2. The second? 3. The third? 4. The fourth? 5. What happened in the reign of Jehoshaphat? 6. Who was the fifth king of Judah? 7. What is said about him in 2 K. 8.18? 8. Who succeeded him? 9. To what dynasty did all these kings belong? 10. What promise was given to the house of David in 2 Sam. 7.13; 1 K. 11.36; 15.4; 2 K. 8.19? 11. How many relatives of Ahaziah had been slain by Jehu? (2 K. 10.13, 14.) 12. How had Athaliah treated the temple of Jehovah? (2 Ch. 24.7.) 13. What was the "testimony" that was given the king's son?

Questions to Think About. 1. What two good kings of Judah have we heard about? 2. Why did Athaliah kill the heirs to the throne? 3. What other queen does Athaliah resemble? 4. What was the relationship of the two? 5. How did the promise made to the house of David seem broken? 6. What was the result of this almost bloodless revolution? 7. Why did Jehoiada plan so carefully the guarding of the prince? 8. What is the meaning of "took an oath of them," verse 4? (*Guide*, p. 416.) 9. For what was the bedchamber used? (*Guide*, p. 417.) 10. Describe what was done at the coronation of Joash? (*Guide* ¶ 7, p. 416). 11. In the early part of the Bible there is a story about a baby who was hidden to save his life: who was he and what were the circumstances? (Ex. 2. 1-10.). 12. In the New Testament there is an account of a baby who was taken to another country to save his life: who was he and what were the circumstances? (Mt. 2.13-23.).

Note-book Work. In your Life of Elisha, write about Elisha's Heavenly Defenders.

THE BOY JOASH CROWNED KING

Golden Text

The house of the wicked shall be overthrown;
But the tent of the upright shall flourish. Proverbs 14.11

LESSON II Kings 11.1-20: verses 4-12 printed MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

4 And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son. 5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do: a third part of you, that come in on the sabbath, shall be keepers of the watch of the king's house; 6 and a third part shall be at the gate Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, and be a barrier. 7 And the two companies of you, even all that go forth on the sabbath, shall keep the watch of the house of Jehovah about the king. 8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and he that cometh within the ranks, let him be slain: and be ye with the king when he goeth out, and when he cometh in.

9 And the captains over hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded; and they took every man his men, those that were to come in on the sabbath, with those that were to go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. 10 And the priest delivered to the captains over hundreds the spears and shields that had been king David's, which were in the house of Jehovah. 11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about. 12 Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, *Long* live the king

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah.* See p. 418.—*Saw that her son was dead.* See ¶ 5, p. 418.—*Destroyed all the seed royal.* All that might be claimants to the throne. The forty-two "brethren of Ahaziah" slain by Jehu (2 K. 10.13, 14) were relatives of the king, but there were other male members of the royal house, especially the children of Ahaziah, whom Athaliah now put to death.

2. *Jehosheba, the daughter of the king Joram, sister of Ahaziah.* She was half-sister of Ahaziah, for they had different mothers. She was the wife of Jehoiada, the priest, 2 Ch. 20.11.—*And put them.* Or, *who were.* RVm.—*Bedchamber.* Or, *chamber for the beds.* See p. 417.

3. *Hid in the house of Jehovah six years.* The Temple was evidently a good hiding-place, little visited during Athaliah's reign.

4. *In the seventh year.* The seventh year of his age, and of Jehu's reign, 2 K. 12.1.—*Jehoiada.* He was now over ninety, according to 2 Ch. 24.1 and 15.—The Carites. They were foreign soldiers: see ¶ 9, p. 418.—*Took an oath of them.* He pledged them to loyalty and secrecy before he showed them the king's young son and told them of his plans.

5–8. *This is the thing that ye shall do.* "The guards (or the Levites) were divided into two great bodies. The first consisted of those who mounted guard on the Sabbath-day, as the kings went to the Temple. These were to keep their usual position, in three detachments; the first at the porch of the palace, the second at one of the Temple gates; the third at another, called, doubtless from its being the usual halting place of the guards, the 'gate of the runners' 2 K. 11.19. These were to keep their places to avoid suspicion. The second division consisted of those who attended the kings to the Temple. These, on the present occasion, were to place themselves on the right and left hand of the young king, inside the Temple, in order to protect his person, and to put to death anyone who came within

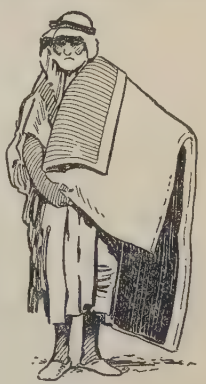
the circle of rails which enclosed the royal seat or stand" (*Stanley*).—*House.* The palace of Athaliah.

10. *Delivered to the captains the spears and shields that had been King David's.* These were probably the weapons that David had taken from his conquered enemies and stored in the Temple: compare 2 S. 8.7. The Levites would be unarmed, and it has been suggested that it may have been the custom for the outgoing guard to leave their weapons for the use of the ingoing guard, and now both divisions were to be armed at once.

11. *Along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.* See verse 5.—*The king's son.* Joash. *Gave him the testimony.* He was formally presented with his special Roll of the Law: See Ex. 25.16; Dt. 17.18, 19. "Similarly the Archbishop of Canterbury presents to our Sovereign at the coronation a Bible, symbolically pointing at once to the source of authority and the course of duty" (*Wood*). The words *gave him* are added by the translators, as the italics in the Bible show, and the literal wording is given in the margin, *put upon* him the crown and the testimony. Taking the literal reading, Dean Stanley comments: "It seems like the intimation of a limitation in the king's despotic power—an indication that he was to be not, like David, above, but beneath the law of his country." It is suggested by Hebrew scholars that a difference of only a single letter would give the Hebrew word for "bracelets" instead of for "testimony."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Put them in the bed chamber.* This was the room where the extra mattresses were stored. Even in the royal palace they did not sleep upon bedsteads, but upon mattresses. In the ordinary houses in Palestine today the inmates sleep upon blankets thrown upon the floor. In the daytime these are packed away along the wall or in a niche provided for them.



Carrying a "Bed" in the East

3. *He was with her hid in the house of Jehovah six years.* He must have had a very quiet life, away from all companions. Children in Syria today have very different pastimes from those in our land. The Rev. Abraham Dimitrie Rihbany, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, describes the life he led as a boy in Syria. "The evenings were very dreary for the little ones. There were no children's story-books to read, and there was no one who could have read them if any of them had fallen into our hands. No pictures for the children, and none to cheer the blankness of those white-washed walls, which the smoke tinged with a murky hue. No toys of any kind. Now and then we fell spontaneously into a fit of laughter or played a game of hide and seek in the dark corners of the room. Now and then we were favored with a tale about a miracle happening in the graveyard, or about ghosts, or wild beasts which made the very hairs of our heads rise up with fear. Our peevishness and naughtiness had no 'psychological guidance.' When bribes, which were by no means of the most persuasive kind, failed, the chief remedy was, 'Be good or the camel will get you!' 'Listen, the hyena is coming! Right at the door!' The hyena, so terrible and so abundant in the surrounding woods and rocky hills, never failed to bring us to terms."

3. *And Athaliah reigned over the land.* They place no woman upon the throne, for it is said (Dt. 17.5): "Thou shalt in any wise set him king," not queen. So also, in all positions of dignity and authority they place only men. *Maimonides.*

12. *Put the crown upon him.* The original word used here for *crown* is the same as is used to denote the diadem of the high priest, which was a plate of gold tied around the head with a ribbon. Doubtless there were other forms of crowns, as other words are used in various passages. *James M. Freeman*, in *Bible Manners and Customs.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In what kingdom did Elijah and Elisha labor? What did we last hear about the Kingdom of Judah? What did Jezebel do, and how did she meet her end? Who was Jezebel's daughter? On what occasion did

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David receive a weapon that had been hung in the Tabernacle? What boys have we heard about in our lessons?

In the Kingdom of Judah. For many weeks our lessons have been about Elijah or Elisha, prophets of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Today we turn to the history of the Kingdom of Judah.

Rehoboam, the first King of Judah, was succeeded by his son Abijah; Abijah by his son Asa; Asa by his son Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat joined Ahab, King of Israel, in the third Syrian campaign; Ahab was killed in his effort to recover Ramoth-Gilead, and the prophet Jehu reproved Jehoshaphat for "helping the wicked." Two reforms are credited to Jehoshaphat: the sending out of princes, Levites, and priests with the Book of the Law of the Lord to teach the people in all the cities of Judah; and the appointing of judges. The Moabites and Ammonites came to wage battle against Jehoshaphat. The King's prayer for help was answered through Jahaziel, and he was wondrously delivered from his enemies.

Upon Jehoshaphat's death, Jehoram, his son, became the King of Judah. He had reigned with his father during his later years, and had signalized his power by putting six brothers to death. "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, for he had the daughter of Ahab (Athaliah) to wife." Trouble came fast upon him. Edom and Libnah revolted from his rule, the Philistines and Arabians invaded the land and took away captive all his sons save Ahaziah, the youngest. A terrible disease seized him and he died, unhonored and unwept, "He departed without being desired."

Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother (Athaliah) was his counsellor to do wickedly." Ahaziah reigned less than a year. He allied himself with Jehoram, king of Israel, in the defense of Ramoth-Gilead, and went down to Jezreel to visit him, when he lay there wounded. There Jehu slew Jehoram, and wounded the fleeing Ahaziah so that he died on reaching Megiddo. On the way to Samaria Jehu met the relatives of Ahaziah who were coming to pay him a friendly visit at court, and slew them all, forty-two in number.

A Critical Time in the House of Judah. The death of Ahaziah would have deprived Athaliah of her position as queen-mother had his son succeeded to the throne. She prevented this by destroying, as she thought, "all the seed royal of the house of Judah," and then she usurped the throne. Her reign was the only break in the history of Judah in the succession of kings of the house of David, while in the Northern Kingdom the fourth dynasty already occupied the throne, It seemed as if the promise of God was broken, that promise to David that "his seed shall endure for ever." But God will not suffer his promises to be broken. How his purposes were carried out in the seventh year of her reign our lesson tells.

The Fate of Athaliah. After the coronation, the people shouted, "Long live the king!" and their acclamations reached the queen in her palace. Unattended she rushed to the temple, and beheld the young king standing by the altar, and heard the blowing of trumpets, and the shouts of the people. "Treason! treason!" she cried, but no one hastened to her defense. At the command of Jehoiada, the ranks opened to let her pass between them, and when she had gone beyond the temple precincts she was slain. The king was brought to the palace, and all the people rejoiced. Then Jehoiada renewed the covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, the latter promising loyalty to their Divine Ruler.

The Character and Power of Athaliah. As we have seen, Athaliah, the daughter of King Ahab of Israel, became the wife of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah. Jezebel was probably her mother, she resembled her in masterfulness, unscrupulousness, and cruelty. As Jezebel had controlled Ahab, so she controlled her husband Jehoram and her son Ahaziah. She was a fanatical worshipper of Baal, and as Jezebel had brought Baal worship into Israel, so did Athaliah into Judah. A temple to Baal was erected in Jerusalem, seemingly within the Temple to Jehovah, and for it she plundered the latter of its sacred vessels, 2 Ch. 24.7.

How was her power possible? Dr. George Adam Smith (in "Jerusalem") finds the explanation in three features of the revolt which overthrew her. "In that revolt a decisive part was played by a body of foreign troops, famous mercenary people, called the Carians, whose presence was natural at the court of virtually a Phœnician princess, and by whose aid, doubtless, she had achieved her usurpation. Secondly, it is clear that she had left untouched the worship

in the Temple. This may explain the temporary acquiescence of Jehovah's adherents in the new régime. But, thirdly, the queen had probably on her side a strong native party. The policy of her house made for increased culture among their peoples. It not only favored commerce, but in opposition to the conservative elements of Hebrew society, as represented by the Rechabites, emphasized the City as the chief factor in the national life. And above all there was the personality of the queen herself. She had a strong capacity for organizing."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is Jerusalem. See p. 302. South of the Temple area there was a second court in which were the King's House and the House of the Daughter of Pharaoh, while south of this was the Great or Outer Court containing other buildings.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

As we study how a King of Judah was saved from death as a child we may well ponder these words from an address at Zürich before the World's Seventh Sunday-School Convention, concerning the opportunity of the Sunday-school to help save the lives of children in mission lands, and we may also give thought to the active part our classes should take in this work.

"The Sunday-school seeks to associate all ages and classes in the study of the Word of God. But the work of the Sunday-school will always be conspicuously for the young, and it will be true always and in all lands that childhood is the time of unrivaled opportunity; in mission lands it offers the Christian influence the most unpreoccupied soil. And the peculiar urgency of its appeal in one respect is intensified in mission lands. Those reached in youth by Christian influences are at an advantage unspeakably great and appealing, in that they are saved from the lasting influences of false conceptions and evil habits which for those won in mature years must remain as an entail from their earlier life. One of the saddest features of past conditions in these lands is suggested in the thought of the moral and spiritual atmosphere, oppressive, corrupting, blighting, into which, without choice of their own, successive generations of newborn children have been introduced. It is the mission of the Sunday-school to create for the on-coming generations a different atmosphere. It will bring to the young life pure conceptions and noble ideals. It will store the mind with gracious words of Scripture and song. Christian effort should make haste to secure for the youth of these lands this new and blessed environment.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

There are two scenes for your pupils; the saving of the baby prince's life; and the crowning of the boy prince. In the former lay stress upon the aunt's kindness, not upon the grandmother's cruelty: in the latter emphasize the boy's coronation, not the queen's death.

Emily E. Entwistle, in "Through the Gate Beautiful," tells the story in a most interesting way for little children. Here is her beginning:—

This is the story of the baby. The baby who was hidden from the soldiers in the ——. No, you guess wrong. You think it is the story of the baby Moses who was hidden in the cradle on the water. This is another story of a baby that was hidden in the strangest place. He was put in a room where the beds were kept, and hidden away behind the mattresses. That was a very funny place to put a dear little baby, but he was quite safe there, so that it was really a very good hiding-place. His grandmother was a very, very wicked queen. When the baby's father, the king, died, this wicked woman thought that she would be queen in his place. But she knew the people would want one of the dead king's children to reign, so she thought she would kill every one of the chidlren and then the people would say, "Yes, you may be our queen because we have not a king." She *did* want to be queen! She wanted to wear a golden crown and be rich and to make every one else do just as she liked. When this wicked plan came into her head she was glad. She sent for the chief captain of the soldiers and she offered him money if he would do as she wished. I am afraid he was very wicked and cruel too, for he went through the palace with his soldiers and killed all the Kings' children he could find. Perhaps he did not know there was a baby. He thought there was not one son left alive, and he told the wicked queen so when he had done his cruel deed. *But*, God is greater than queens and kings.

The baby had a very kind and brave auntie. When she heard the noise of the soldiers marching through the palace and the sound of frightened people flying from them, she did not run away. She tried to think of a way to save the children. Perhaps the baby and the baby's nurse were in her room just then; anyhow, she could not save the other children, but she picked up the baby and with the nurse she ran to a room close by, where every morning the beds were rolled up out of the way. In this land people did not have bedsteads as we do, but they slept on mats that were rolled up during the day. There she hid both the nurse and baby with the mattresses piled up all around them so that no one could see them. The soldiers opened the door and looked in, but they said, "Only beds here," and went out again, for who would think of a baby pushed away behind a heap of mattresses?

But the baby had another Friend besides auntie, a Friend much more powerful. That was the Friend above the bright blue sky. His Heavenly Father knew that little Joash, for that was the baby's name, was hidden, and he kept him from harm.

Today's Golden Text is not a suitable one for your pupils. Instead, recall the Shepherd Psalm, especially the words, The Lord is my Shepherd.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Somewhere I have read a dialogue in which a young man who lived in Palestine, said: "Dost thou not remember Prince Solomon, 'young and tender' in the day that he became king? Call to mind also the Prince Joash, who became king of Judah when he was but seven years old; the Prince Manasseh, who reigned when he was twelve, the Prince Josiah who reigned when he was eight; the Prince Uzziah, who reigned when he was sixteen. Verily all these were boys when they were raised to the kingship."

"I had forgotten that," confessed the other lad. "In my country—England, you know—there was a King who began to reign when he was nine."

"Think not that the Holy One of Israel hath no work for thee to do because thou art yet a lad," continued the young man. "Remember Samuel, to whom God spoke while he was yet a child ministering before Eli at Shiloh. As for thyself, doubt not but that the Almighty hath somewhat for thee to do, even though thou art in thy youth, and though thou mayest not be called to prophesy, or to judge, or to wear the crown of kingship." About which of these young Princes does our lesson tell us a most interesting story?

For Older Pupils. When Mutesa, the ruler of four million subjects in the kingdom of Uganda, British East Africa, died in 1884, it was an anxious time for all who heard the news. The reason is explained by the author of "Uganda's White Man of Work": For generations, the death of a monarch in Uganda had been the signal for robbery and bloodshed. People, sometimes to the number of two thousand, had been captured in the highways and offered as sacrifices at the grave of the dead ruler. Until the chiefs met and chose a new king from among the sons of the late monarch, no one was sure of his life. Upon the crowning of the fortunate prince, all his brothers who had been held as prisoners would be slain except the eldest, who, according to Uganda custom, never sat on the throne.

Several times in the history of Israel we hear of a king's putting all his brothers to death on ascending the throne. To-day we hear of a queen who seeks to establish herself on the throne by destroying "all the seed royal." Who was she? Who were her parents?

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I God's Purposes can not be Frustrated

Of His Kingdom there shall be No End. I shall establish the throne of his kingdom forever, was the promise made to David in 2 S. 7.13. In Abijah's prophecy to Jeroboam, when he told him that he should rule over ten tribes, he said that unto Solomon's son Rehoboam one tribe should be given, "that David my servant may have a lamp alway before me in Jerusalem," 1 K. 11.36. In the record of Abijah's reign we read that he did evil, "nevertheless for David's sake did Jehovah his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him," 1 K. 15.4. Jehoram likewise did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah.

"Howbeit Jehovah would not destroy Judah, for David his servant's sake as he promised him to give unto him a lamp for his children alway." And the light of David's lamp did not fail, for although Athaliah thought she had put to death all of the royal line that Jehu had not slain, one little lad escaped the massacre, and the house of David was protected till the coming of David's Greater Son, to whom the Lord God gave the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end, Luke 1.32, 33.

Athaliah thought she had annulled that promise; she thought she had put to death all of the royal line. She doubtless also thought that she could overthrow the worship of Jehovah, that Baal would become the god of the people of Judah. In December, 1906, in a little village on the Baltic, a manifesto was read in all the churches and halls which abolished the rule of the Czar of Russia and of the Lord! God's rule cannot thus be overthrown.

God can Write Straight on Crooked Lines. You remember how Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. It was the purpose of his brethren to get rid of him because they were jealous of him and hated him. They wished to do him harm, but it proved a fortunate thing for him that he was thus taken to Egypt, even though he went as a slave, for "The Lord was with him, and the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." It was God's purpose that he should become second only to the Pharaoh of Egypt, and the evil plans of his brothers but furthered his design.

"Doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid
By some great law unseen, the still
Unfathomed purpose to fulfill."

The ancient Portuguese proverb says, God can write straight on crooked lines. Man may attempt to defeat his will, but he never succeeds. The will of God will be done; but great is our loss if we miss the opportunity of doing it, and great is our guilt if we attempt to frustrate it! Teach me to do thy will.

Lincoln's Faith. "The purposes of the almighty are perfect and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perfect them in advance." This was Lincoln's faith. On one occasion during the war when the worst fears prevailed, a senator called on the President and said that if only the nation would do right, Providence would restore its unity and prosperity. "My faith is greater than yours," returned Lincoln, with face aglow. "I not only believe that if we do right, God will lead us safely out of this wilderness and restore our dissevered Union, but I also believe that he will compel us to do right in order that he may do these things. Not so much because we desire them, as that they accord with his plans of dealing with this nation, in the midst of which he means to establish justice. I think he means that we shall do more than we have yet done in the furtherance of his plans, and he will open the way for our doing it."

God Sets Limits to Wickedness. Athaliah was clever, powerful, and unscrupulous, but she was checkmated by another woman yet more cunning. It is always interesting to note how God sets unsuspected limits to wickedness. We often speak of splendid houses having skeletons in the closet, and here for six years was a very lively skeleton in the closet, to step out at a critical moment bringing the truculent queen to judgment.

Nothing got by injustice, untruthfulness, violence, can last. Will men ever believe this? There is always a hidden specter waiting to avenge a wrong. We fancy we are astute, that we have given justice the slip, when out steps the witness and executioner, and we pay the uttermost farthing. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

II What one Resolute Person can do

Jehoiada and Jehosheba. The lesson teaches us how much one brave good man and woman can do to change the whole face of things, and how often there needs but one man to direct and voice the thoughts and acts of the silent multitude, and to light the fire that consumes evil. *Dr Alexander Maclaren.*

Counsel from Emerson. Wait not to be backed by numbers. Wait not till you are sure of an echo from a crowd. The fewer voices on the side of truth, the more distinct and strong must be your own.

The Courage of Telemachus. The veteran Stilicho had conquered Alaric and his Goths. The Romans invited the hero to gladiatorial games in honor of

the victory. The Empire had been Christian for a hundred years, yet these infamous and brutalizing shows still continued. Deadened by custom, people argued "that the gladiators themselves like them; that they gain their livelihood by them; that they train the multitude to bravery; that, at any rate, the enjoyment of the respectable many is worth more than the anguish of a squalid few." The games begin; the tall, strong men enter the arena; the tragic cry echoes through the amphitheatre, "*Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutamus*," (Farewell, Cæsar, we who are about to die salute thee), the swords are drawn, and at an instant's signal will be bathed in blood. At that very instant down leaps into the arena a rude, ignorant monk (Telemachus, or Almachus), who, however rude and ignorant, can tear to pieces by the strength of righteousness all these devil's cobwebs of guilty custom and guilty acquiescence. "The gladiators shall not fight!" he exclaims: "are you going to thank God by shedding innocent blood?" A yell of execration rises from those 80,000 spectators. "Who is this impudent wretch? Down with him! Pelt him! Cut him down!" Stones are hurled at him; the gladiators, angry at his interference, run him through with their swords; he falls dead, and his body is kicked aside, and the games go on, and the people —Christians and all—shout applause. Ay! They go on, and the people shout, but for the last time. Their eyes are opened; their sophistry is at an end; the blood of a martyr is on their souls. Shame stops forever the massacre of gladiators; the hearts of Christians are no longer "brazed by damned custom," and because one poor, ignorant hermit had moral courage, "one more habitual crime was wiped away from the annals of the world." *Dr. F. W. Farrar* in *Sermons.*

Something for Boys to Remember.

"There's something I'd have you remember, boys,
To help in the battle of life;
'Twill give you strength in the time of need,
And help in the hour of strife.
Whenever there's something that should be done,
Don't be faint-hearted and say,
'What use to try?' Remember then
That where there's a will there's a way."

III Saving a Boy

The Child Moses. How much of the World's History that tiny coffer among the reeds held! How different that history would have been if it had floated away, or if the feeble life within had wailed itself dead unheard! The solemn possibilities folded and slumbering in an infant are always awful to a thoughtful mind. But, except the manger at Bethlehem, did ever a cradle hold as much as did that papyrus chest? The set of opinion at present minimizes the importance of the individual, and exalts the spirit of the period, as a factor in history. A truer view is that great epochs require great men, and without such leaders, no solid advance in the world's progress is achieved. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren*, in *The Book of Exodus.*

How a Seven-year-old Boy Helped to Save Many Boys and Girls in India. Little seven-year-old Roy, the son of a missionary in India, had so won the heart of the owner of a beautiful house, that she gave it to him, house and grounds and all. "What am I to do with it?" he asked, when the wonderful present was made to him. His mother answered: "Little son," she said, "there are two things you can do with Dil Kusha, 'Heart's Delight'." (So the beautiful place was called, in Miss Kathleen Simmons' story.) "You are very young to choose, but you *shall* choose. In any case you could not live in your house 'for always'—you must go to England and be educated if you want to get on in the world. So there is this choice. For just a few years we could all live in Dil Kusha and be very comfortable in it—I could perhaps take care of some other English children. I could engage good teachers from the schools here for you and Stella. We could have a splendid time and do the very best we could for ourselves."

She paused. "What is the other plan?" asked Roy.

"We—that is *you*, Roy, could give Dil Kusha to the mission. It could be filled with the little children whose parents are dying of cholera in the plains. Daddy and I could take charge: we could save their frail little bodies, and oh, far better, we could teach them the Truth, and feed not only their growing bodies,

but their stunted souls. Daddy's work would be in this beautiful hill climate. We should have no rent to pay. With what we save and earn we could send you and Stella home to be thoroughly well educated. I think if we did our best for the children of India God would make people very kind to our bairns in England. You said no chances came to children. Here is Roy, a little boy of seven, with a choice to make. Choose, Roy!"

So Roy chose. From England he wrote: "People in England are very kind to us and we like our schools. We work as hard as we can, to please Mother and Daddy in India, and when the holidays come we spend them together. Then we talk of India, and of Daddy and Mother in dear Dil Kusha. We often think how nice it is that the house which started as 'Heart's Delight' should be true to its name and bring life and joy and healing to so many."

Conserving Our True Resources. Governor Hughes, pointing to a group of children, said in an address: "Fellow-citizens, we desire to conserve our natural resources. We pride ourselves on the riches of our country in mine, forest and field; but these boys and girls are our true resources, without which all else fails." How are these resources being conserved in your State? What are your laws in regard to child labor? Are they being enforced?

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

"It teaches us how God watches over his purposes when they seem nearest to failure, for one poor infant was all that was left of the seed of David: and how, therefore, we are never to despair, even in the darkest hour, of the fulfillment of his promise."

Our Prayer: Almighty God, thou who art the Ruler of all the earth, by whom kings reign and the wicked are overthrown and the upright flourish, we rejoice that mighty is thy will and there is naught which man can do to prevail against it. We rejoice, too, that while thou art almighty thou art also all-loving, and dost care for and protect each one of thy children. May we never lack the comfort and the courage which comes from the knowledge that we are in thy care.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jehoiada's power comparable to that of men today who have influence with those in authority, whether kings or presidents or statesmen of whatsoever sort.
2. Necessary revolutions.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who had first wished to build the temple, and why had he been prevented from building it? (1 Ch. 17.) 2. How had he prepared for the work? (1 Ch. 28.) 3. Who had built the temple? (1 K. 6.14.) 4. How had the temple suffered under Athaliah? (2 Ch. 24.7.) 5. In what form was the "current money"? (*Guide*, ¶ 3, p. 424.) 6. How was money kept in those days? (*Guide*, ¶ 2, p. 426.) 7. What is the money chest called in Mk. 12.41? 8. What was the great event in Joash's reign? 9. How long did Joash do right? (2 K. 12.2.) 10. What course did he pursue after the death of Jehoiada, and how did he die? (2 Ch. 24.15–27.) 11. What is said about giving in Mt. 6.1; 10.8; Acts 20.35; Rom. 12.8; 2 Cor. 9.6–10?

Questions to Think About. 1. How old was the temple? 2. What were the "breaches"? 3. What is meant by "all the money of the hallowed things"? 4. In what way was the second plan for raising money different from the first? 5. Why did the first plan fail? 6. Why did the second succeed? 7. If a tent or a barn is the only meeting-place that people can afford, does such a place honor God? 8. Is it right to worship in a church that has fallen into decay if the worshippers can afford a beautiful sanctuary? 9. Is it difficult to get money for church purposes today? Why? 10. What cheerful giver did Jesus once commend? 11. Why do not those who have charge of public funds today deserve praise if they manage them honestly? 12. Is it as wrong to "embezzle" trust funds as to "steal" from a cash drawer?

Note-book Work. In your Book of the Kings of Judah write an account of the childhood and coronation of Joash.

LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 7

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

Golden Text

God loveth a cheerful giver. II Corinthians 9.7

LESSON II Kings 11.21–12.16: verse 12.4–15 printed
MEMORIZE verse 9

4 And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the hallowed things that is brought into the house of Jehovah, in current money, the money of the persons for whom each man is rated, and all the money that it cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of Jehovah, 5 let the priests take it to them, every man from his acquaintance; and they shall repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found. 6 But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. 7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and for the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore take no *more* money from your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. 8 And the priests consented that they should take no *more* money from the people, neither repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of Jehovah: and the priests that kept the threshold put therein all the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah. 10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags and counted the money that was found in the house of Jehovah. 11 And they gave the money that was weighed out into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of Jehovah: and they paid it out to the carpenters and the builders, that wrought upon the house of Jehovah, 12 and to the masons and the hewers of stone, and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the breaches of the house of Jehovah, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it. 13 But there were not made for the house of Jehovah cups of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah; 14 for they gave that to them that did the work, and repaired therewith the house of Jehovah. 15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to give to them that did the work; for they dealt faithfully.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

4. *Jehoash.* Another form of Joash.—*All the money of the hallowed things.* The money set apart for the purposes of the Sanctuary.—*In current money.* The money was not coined, but was in ingots or rings valued according to weight. (Instead of "In current money" the margin gives the reading, "Even the money of every one that passeth the numbering," which then refers to the half-shekel paid by every Israelite above twenty enumerated in the census, Ex. 30.11–16: see 2 Ch. 24.6–9.)—*The money of the persons for whom each man is rated.* Heb. Each man the money of the souls of his estimation, RVm. The money paid for the redemption of vows: Lev. 27.2–8. "In this case the priest had to fix the sum to be paid according to the sex, age, etc., of the one who had made the vow" (*Lange*). "In the Babylonian Temple-records, from the great Sun Temple of Sippara, the mention is found of the tithes and dues being applied to repairs." *The money that it cometh into any man's heart to bring.* Voluntary offerings, Lev. 22.18.

5–17. Compare the somewhat different account given in 2 Ch. 24.4–14.

5. *Let the priests take it to them, every man from his acquaintance.* "The priests and Levites were sent through the whole land, to ask half a shekel from each person for the furniture and restoration of the temple, which had been broken up by Joram and Athaliah and her sons" (*Josephus*). At first Jehoash depended

upon the priests to carry out his plan of restoration and each was to collect in his own section of the country.—*Breaches.* Time and neglect had caused the walls to crack and crumble, and even the foundation needed repair, 2 Ch. 24.27.

7. *Why repair ye not the breaches of the house?* "There can be no doubt that with the decay of the house of the Lord, the decrease of the offerings had also taken place. The priests and Levites had perhaps found much difficulty in increasing the sums collected, and in apportioning what they received between their own maintenance and the restoration fund. There seems to have been no blame attached to them by the king, and the explanation they offered, whatever, it may have been, was so far satisfactory that the priests who kept the door of the house were placed in charge of the box that was provided for the offerings" (*Lumby*).—*Now therefore take no more money from your acquaintance.* The priests were no longer to go throughout the land to collect money, but it was to be publicly offered when the people came to Jerusalem to worship.

8. *The priests consented.* They were evidently glad to be relieved of the burden. It is thought that under Athaliah much of their own lawful income had been alienated (2 Ch.31.4.) Now they agreed that they themselves should have no part in the voluntary contributions, and that especially appointed agents should have charge of such contributions.

9. *A chest.* The "treasury" of Mk. 12.41.—*The altar.* The brazen altar of burnt offerings outside the temple.

10. *They saw that there was much money in the chest.* The weight of the chest would tell them this.—*The king's scribe.* Or, *secretary,* RVm.—*The high priest.* "The title was applied to Aaron and Eleazar, but we do not find it used again till now, when the civil position of the high priest became a more influential one. The office of 'chief priest' was a different one." (*Wood*).—*Put up.* Hebrew, *bound up and,* RVm.—*Counted the money.* The value was learned by weighing the bags.

11. *The hands of them that did the work.* As overseers.—*Paid it out.* Hebrew, *brought it forth,* RVm.

12. *Was laid out.* Heb., *went forth,* RVm.

13. *There were not made.* The repairs were first completed: later this work, too, was carried out, 2 Ch. 24.14.—*Trumpets.* "Clarions: the special word for the silver trumpets of the priests used at sacred festivals, coronations, etc."

15. *They reckoned not.* 2 K. 22.7.

16. *It was the priest's.* According to the law, Lev. 7.7.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *The money of the persons for whom each man is rated.* The government of Syria today derives its income from three main sources: First, tax on imports and exports; second, on property; third, on male persons of a certain age. This third, from which Mohammedans are exempted, but at which all others are rated, is called a poll or personal tax, and is levied on male persons; but when a man should begin or when he should stop paying this personal tax is left to the varying judgment of the representatives of the heads of the fathers of families (2 Ch. 19.8). These "heads" sometimes differ, then make a compromise, and rate the person at half the whole amount. A boy remains free until about the age of ten, then he is taxed for either half or the whole of the amount. Henceforth he becomes "reckoned," and passes into the division of men who are called "numbered," "reckoned," or "counted" for taxing purposes. At the age of between sixty and seventy, or if he becomes bodily disabled, he ceases to be taxed, and thus passes out of the numbered. It may happen that additional taxes have to be raised for special purposes. In such cases, the numbered, or reckoned, have the additional bur-

An Egyptian Chest

den. Non-Mohammedan ecclesiastical establishments are on the voluntary principle, and derive their revenues from vows and gifts. Two plates are placed at the church door, one for the benefit of the priest, and the other for the church fund. The priest comes and empties his into his pocket, while the church plate is taken by the stewards and the money poured into the box of the church through a hole in the lid. The money then cannot be taken out until all the stewards are present to apply their respective keys, for the box has as many locks as there are stewards. *Mrs. Ghosn-el-Howie,* in *Sunday-school Times.*

Weighing Money

10. ***Put up in bags.*** Money was kept in the royal treasuries in bags, the value of the contents first ascertained and marked upon each bag, which was then sealed. Thenceforth, as long as the seal remained unbroken, the bag was estimated at its marked value, without recounting. This was customary in ancient Egypt, and is still the usage in Persia and in other parts of the East. Private bankers pursue a similar plan, so that in some parts of the Levant a "purse" is the word used for a particular sum of money. These bags are made of cotton cloth. *James M. Freeman, Bible Manners and Customs.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. By whom was the Temple built? In what year? What had David done for it? How was it consecrated? Who had objected to his subjects going to the Temple to worship? Why? What did he set up for worship and where?

The Great Event in Joash's Reign. Having sworn to the covenant on his accession, the young king's first duty naturally was to repair the Temple, the visible sign of the covenant, which to the people was God's dwelling place among them. The planning for the repairs to the Temple and carrying out occupied many years. It is the only event of Joash's reign which the writer of Kings records.

The Downfall of Joash. Joash reigned forty years, and as long as Jehoiada the priest lived to instruct him he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. His weakness is seen as soon as the aged priest died. Then the king hearkened unto the princes and allowed them to serve the Asherim and other idols, and when Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, reproved them, the king ordered him stoned to death. "Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son." The Syrians invaded the land and captured Gath, but were bought off from attacking Jerusalem by Joash with "the hallowed things" in the Temple. His end followed soon after, for his own servants murdered him in his bed. The Chronicler concludes his account of Joash's reign with these words: Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the rebuilding of the house of God, behold they are written in the commentary of the book of the Kings.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

It was a time in Judah when a great revival of giving was needed. It is a time in our land when the evangelization of the world must be pushed forward as never before. For that, great givers must be educated in our Sunday-schools. "The missionaries of tomorrow and the great givers of tomorrow are in the Sunday-school of today. The men and the means for world conquest are among our youth. Their interests must be aroused, their sympathy secured, and their talents enlisted in the great cause if the whole wide world is to be won to Christ."

How are you training your pupils to give? Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery writes as follows in *The Continent*: "We still teach our children to sing, 'Hear the pennies dropping,' though in everything else but religion the child of today has as his unit of value, not the penny, but the nickel. He has a nickel for the moving-picture show, a nickel or dime for the ice cream soda fountain, and a penny for his mission box. With the terrible logic of childhood, he concludes as to the relative value of these commodities. The child who has only chance pennies to spend on himself is being educated to give when he drops a penny for

missions; but the child who has quarters and dimes and nickels for self and pennies for God is getting ready to join, later, the great army of the uninterested. We love what we give for, what we sacrifice for, what we toil for with sweat of mind and body."

One Sunday-school reports the offerings by coins. For example: Class No. 1, 23 present; offering 5 dimes, 10 nickels, 8 pennies.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Older pupils need to understand the details of this lesson in order to grasp its full meaning, but in teaching it to your pupils you will not attempt to teach the text in full. The facts for your pupils are these: The Temple needed repairing; almost the first thing that the boy king, Joash, did was to ask the priests to collect money for its repair; years passed and nothing was done; then the chest with the hole in the top was put at the entrance of the Temple; the people gave willingly, the money was paid out to the workmen, and the house of God was restored. Compare the chest to a child's bank. Take for your theme, God loveth a cheerful Giver, telling the story about Charley, p. 428.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is the title of our lesson? Where was the temple? Who had built it? What king first thought of building it? What were his reasons for wishing to build it? Why was he not permitted to carry out his wish? What promises were made to him which more than consoled him for having to give up his wish? (1 K. 5–8.)

How old was Joash when he was made king? Where had he lived before this event? Perhaps, young as he was, he had already noticed how the temple was falling in pieces, and how much it needed repair. How soon it was after he became king that he gave orders to collect money for its restoration, we do not know. How did he first plan to get the money?

For Older Pupils. The Spaniards consider their great church of the Escurial a likeness of Solomon's Temple and in front they have erected colossal statues of the Kings of Judah who were associated with the erection and restoration of the Jewish Temple. Who was the Proposer? The Founder? Who were the Restorers?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I For the Temple

Why the Temple Needed Repairing. Partly depleted by the exactions of Shishak, King of Egypt, the Temple treasuries were refilled by Asa, and emptied again by the same king for tribute to the king of Aram: fluctuations which happened frequently in the course of the history. Joash might have repaired the Temple at the expense of the royal treasury, no doubt, but then the people would have had no hand in the matter. They had renewed the covenant with Jehovah and a proof thereof was to be given in their efforts for his house.

In Asia Minor Today. The Protestants of Kessab in Asia Minor are rebuilding their church, destroyed by fire during the last massacres. Kessab men in the United States have contributed a thousand pounds Turkish. The women have actually brought 100,000 basket loads of sand for the construction of the walls. Even the children have paid for the carving of John 6.37 and 14.6 on the doors.

Why is it so Difficult to get Money for Church Purposes? It is not because the legitimacy or necessity of those purposes is questioned in the church itself, but because so many of its members have nothing to give. When the turn of the church comes, their money is all gone. It is really gone. They have spent it already on whatever appealed to them—on the necessaries of life, on traveling, on amusements, on dress, on pleasures of every description. The idea that from the very beginning there should be a restraint exercised upon self in this connection—that the impulse to indulge and to enjoy should be checked in view of Christian obligations—has not so much as occurred to them; they have nothing to give because there is nothing left. Is it not an elementary Christian duty to do without some things, to exercise thrift, to save by saying No to self, that we may have a stone of our own in the Christian Temple? It is not direct begging which will bring the church out of its financial difficulties—people easily become proof to dunning—but the revival in the soul of what Jesus meant by the renunciation of self. *Dr. James Denney* in *The British Weekly.*

How Charley Built the Church. A minister had an appointment to preach in the country. On getting out of the cars at the station, according to the directions given him, he told the driver to take him to "Ebenezer Chapel." "Ebenezer?" said the driver; "oh, you mean little Charley's chapel, don't you?" "No, said the minister, "I mean Ebenezer." "Yes, but we about here always call it 'Little Charley's Chapel'". "And why do you call it so?" asked the minister. "Because little Charley laid the foundation-stone. You see, sir," continued the driver, "it happened this way. A few years ago we wanted a new chapel. A meeting was called to talk the matter over. A good deal was said at that meeting about how the money could be raised. But the times were hard; and the people were poor; and labor and materials were very dear. So they resolved that the chapel could not be built; and then the meeting broke up.

"But a day or two after the meeting, a little boy about nine years old came to the minister's door and rang the bell. The minister himself opened the door and found the little fellow there. His face was all flushed and the perspiration thick on his forehead. In front of him was his little toy wheelbarrow, and in the barrow were six new bricks. He had wheeled his load up a long steep hill, and was out of breath, so that he could hardly speak. 'Well, Charley,' asked the wondering minister, 'what is the meaning of this?' 'Oh, please sir,' said Charley, 'I heard you wanted a new chapel and were about giving it up; so I begged these few bricks from the men who are building a house down in the village and thought they would do to begin with.'

"With tears in his eyes the minister thanked Charley for what he had done. Then he called another meeting of the people about the chapel. Charley's bricks were piled up on the table in front of the minister. He told the story of what Charley had done. Then he made a little speech to them about it. He said, 'If they were all as earnest in the business of building the chapel as that little boy was the work would soon be done.' This had a great effect on them. They resolved that the chapel should be built, but Charley laid the first stone. It is a big chapel. It will hold a thousand people and now it is out of debt." *J. Reid Howatt*, in *The Children's Preacher*.

II God Loveth a Cheerful Giver

They Offered Willingly. When David was telling about his preparations for the temple which his son Solomon was to build, he said: "Moreover, also, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver I give it unto the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house. He appealed to the people with this result: Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to Jehovah: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. How the thought of willingness is emphasized!

When the temple was finally repaired under Joash, "the money that it cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of Jehovah" came quickly and willingly, and again the people rejoiced.

Doctor Maclaren remarks somewhere that in the Christian experience "offered willingly" is almost tautology, for unwilling offerings are a contradiction, and, in fact, there are no such things: the quality of unwillingness destroys the character of the offering and robs it of all sacredness. Reluctant Christianity is not Christianity. That noun and that adjective can never be buckled together.

The Cheerful Givers are the Great Givers. Every new year, before January is over, the newspapers publish lists of the great gifts given during the old year. They chronicle the tens of thousands given by some, the quarter- and half-millions by others, and so on up to the millions and ten millions of our American Crœsuses. It is an imposing list, and grows more imposing each year.

Every now and then, in the little record printed by the American Bible Society, a modest list of gifts is chronicled, with the letters that accompany them. Here are two taken from one column:

"Dear Friend: My husband has gone to his reward, in his eighty-sixth year. I had laid by one dollar for a special thank offering because I have been able to wait upon myself in my advanced age. Though it is not much, I feel that the Lord would have me send it to you."

The second enclosing a check for twenty dollars, told how the writer had sold some long-treasured heirlooms, and said: "To use this money for myself would seem almost like sacrilege, so I am intrusting it to you and to others to use in

such a way as seems fitting in carrying the gospel message to the regions beyond. So shall I feel that the beautiful old things, which were links to a long-gone past, are promoted to higher service than lying carefully put away. I trust that he who fed thousands from the loaves and fishes of a little lad may multiply this little offering."

Who are, after all, the great givers? Some may envy the power to give millions—but are not these generous souls more enviable still? *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

Cheerful Givers. I have noticed that some people assume they are very generous, but it is simply because they have no system in their giving and no record of their gifts. You will find, when you get into your churches, that some people confuse the number of appeals they have heard with the number of times they have given; and the mere remembrance of the appeals makes them sweat under the burdened sense of their bounty. Their self-deception is not intentional: it is only consequential: they have very poor memories, and they use no system to aid them. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *The Preacher: His Life and Work.*

We Thank Thee.

Not for the harvest alone,
But for the field to till;
Not for the gifts we give,
But for the heart's good will;
Not for the great high tower,
But for zeal in building up;
Not for the draught we share,
But for joy filling the cup;
Not for the evening red
Or for the bird's sweet call,
But for joy, joy in it all.

Leigh Richmond Miner.

III Trustworthiness

They Dealt Faithfully. As soon as the chest was full its contents were put up in bags and their value marked thereon. Then the bags were handed over to certain men who paid the money out to the overseers and contractors who had charge of the workmen. These treasurers, as we may call them, were known to be men of such integrity, that no account was demanded of them of the way in which they discharged their part of the work. What a splendid testimony this to their reputation for upright dealing!

In every community there is many a man today of whom others say, "I would trust that man just as soon as I would myself." He is known to be so thoroughly upright that he would be trusted implicitly with any sum of money, an accounting would be required for business reasons, but not as a proof of his honesty.

Such a reputation every Christian should have. "I have charge of thousands of men," said a Japanese army contractor; "I do everything in my power to awaken their sense of honor; but the only men that I can trust without watching are those who have accepted the Jesus teaching."

Discount or Premium. A great charitable institution was about to let the contract to provision its different branches. There were model cottages for old people, a children's hospital and a general hospital. The contract was important. Courtney Royce and Alexander Hooper had offered bids. The day the contract was to be awarded, Doctor Horne overtook Mr. Fisher, the banker, one of the trustees of the institution, and drove him home to dinner.

"You must be about ready to let out the contract," the doctor said. "Courtney Royce will get it, I suppose."

"I'm not at all sure of that," Mr. Fisher replied.

"His tender's the lowest, isn't it? And he has his father-in-law's bond. You couldn't get a better."

"No. And Alexander Hooper has nothing but his own bond to offer. But personally I like Hooper's offer better."

The doctor laughed. "How do you make that out?"

"By taking everything into consideration. You are looking at the circumstances, and forgetting the man."

"Courtney Royce is all right."

"Just so. But don't you think if the wholesale house offered him a little cheaper grade of goods for our use it would suit him about as well, always provided the cheaper stuff looked pretty much like the other? You have to discount a little for character in his case, that's all," Mr. Fisher said. "You take him at a discount, and not at a premium."

"That's true," assented the doctor.

"Would you say the same of Alexander Hooper?"

"No." Doctor Horne's answer was emphatic. "If you were willing to take an inferior article, Alexander Hopper wouldn't give it to you."

"Character at a premium," said Mr. Fisher. "Don't you think we can afford to pay a little more on the year's contract, and award it to Hooper?"

Courtney Royce never could understand why the contract went to Alexander Hooper. "Influence!" he grumbled, and did not guess that it was the influence of character. *Adapted* from the *Youth's Companion.*

As Good as his Word. Christian Frederick Swartz, missionary to India in 1748–1798, won the confidence of three most dissimilar parties—an oppressed people, a suspicious tyrant and the directors of the British Empire in the East. Hyder Ali said, "Do not send me any of your agents, for I do not trust their words or their treaties; but if you wish me to listen to your proposals send to me the missionary of whose character I have heard so much from every one; him will I trust and receive. Send me the Christian." In the time of famine the people would bring nothing into Tanjore because they had been plundered and deceived by the officers. The Rajah said, "We all, you and I, have lost our credit; let us try if the inhabitants will trust Mr. Swartz." He was authorized to act as agent for the government. Within two days two thousand measures of rice were brought in to the starving garrison. This was done on the simple promise of a missionary that they would be paid in due time. The British Government had all faith in his integrity. The military and civil servants with whom he had to do became his friends. The Hindus would do anything for him. Every kind of favor was shown him. To crown all, the Rajah made him the guardian of his son. On his death-bed he said to Swartz, "He is not my son but yours." *Condensed* from *Epoch Makers of Modern Missions* by *Archibald McLean.*

As God as His Uniform. An old Irishwoman entered a crowded car with a large heavy basket. The conductor called her back and directed her to leave the basket on the platform. She refused, fearing the basket would be stolen. A Boy Scout offered her his seat, saying, "You sit here, and I'll watch your basket." "Like enough ye's 'd think 'twas a fine joke to be runnin' off with an ould woman's dinner," she said as she shook her head. "Oh, go on!" the conductor cried, "the boy's all right. He'll take care of your stuff." When she was leaving the car the Boy Scout offered to carry it home for her, and to this she gladly assented. Then an interested passenger asked the conductor what he knew about the boy. "I don't know who he is,—never saw him before, but I know what that khaki suit stands for. You can trust that every time," the conductor replied.

Evidences of a Christian. When a Christian means one whose word is his bond, who can be trusted with untold treasure without fear of his stealing, whose praise is an honor and whose friendship is a jewel of priceless value; one who does his duty towards his fellow-men as a service to his God; one whom you can more certainly trust to paint your house, or make your clothes, or draw your will, or take care of the health of your family, because he is a Christian; one whose outward integrity is the proof of inward purity,—then the church will have great praise and large triumph. *Dr. Henry van Dyke,* in *The Story of the Psalms.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

One's word ought to be as good as one's bond. A keen sense of honor, a reputation for upright dealing, are important assets in business and social life. A Christian should scorn to be anything but trustworthy.

It is our duty to give regularly and willingly for the maintenance of our church.

Our Prayer: We thank thee, our heavenly Father, for our place of worship, for the privilege it offers us of knowledge of thee, communion with thee, fellowship with one another, and of opportunity of working for thee. If we have given unwillingly or meagerly for its maintenance, forgive us, and make us generous givers as far as we are able. Make us trustworthy in all things, O God. We remember with shame and sorrow occasions when we have not dealt uprightly. Strengthen our sense of honor and make us worthy to be called thy sons.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Systematic giving in the Sunday-school: its difficulties, and its methods.
2. Curing sick churches. See article with this title by Charles Stelzle, *Outlook*, Oct. 4, 1913.
3. Upright dealing in public offices.
4. How may children be trained in generosity?.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who was Daniel? 2. In whose reign was Daniel taken to Babylon and by whom? (Dan 1.1.) 3. What were the Jewish names of the four youths, and what were the new names given them? (Dan. 1.6, 7.) 4. What instances of refusal to eat meat that had been offered to idols are recorded in the second Book of Maccabees? (*Guide*, p. 433.) 5. What was the "pulse"? (*Guide*, ¶ 7, p. 432.) 6. How did Daniel show that he feared God more than an earthly king? (6.10–18.) 7. In what other instances did Daniel show the courage of his convictions? 8. What does Professor Driver say about the magicians and enchanters of Babylonia? (*Guide*, p. 433.) 9. Find out what you can about the effect upon the body and mind of drinking intoxicating liquors and of gluttony.

Questions to Think About. 1. Was it an honor for a Hebrew boy to receive food and drink from the king's table? 2. Why did Daniel regard the king's meat and drink as defiling? (*Guide*, p. 432.) 3. What does "purposed in his heart" mean? 4. How did his rejection of it prove his loyalty to God? (*Guide*, ¶ 8, p. 435.) 5. What lessons for you have Daniel's words and action? 6. Did Daniel's water and plain fare have anything to do with his clear head? 7. What other Old Testament heroes, strangers in a strange land, excelled the national people in their wisdom? (Moses, Joseph.)

Note-book Work. In your book about the Kings of Judah write How Joash Repaired the Temple.

Questions Upon the Book of Daniel. What reference is there in the Book of Ezekiel to Daniel? What is peculiar about this reference if it refers to the hero of the Book of Daniel? To what kind of family did Daniel belong? How did he happen to be in Babylon? In what year was he brought there? How did he gain favor with King Nebuchadnezzar? To what office was he appointed? What dreams did he interpret? Under what circumstances did he come before Belshazzar? What did he tell Belshazzar would happen, and how was the prediction fulfilled? What is the story about the den of lions? What four visions did Daniel have?

Who is the author of the Book of Daniel? Why is it called the Book of Daniel? In the stories about Daniel, who seems to be speaking? In the account of the visions, who is the speaker? In what two languages is the Book written? Why? What position has the book in the Hebrew Bible? Why was it not placed with "the Latter Prophets"?

What three views are held by scholars in regard to the purpose and date of the Book? If it dates from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, how is the Second Part to be interpreted? If it was written during the lifetime of Daniel, what is the interpretation of the Second Part? What is the name given by secular history to the last Chaldean king of Babylon? What does the Book of Daniel call him? What light has been thrown upon this discrepancy by a discovery at Ur? Who conquered the last Chaldean king? What does the Book of Daniel call the new ruler? How may this be explained?

What are the Two Parts of the Book? What is the character of each Part? How do they differ in literary style? What light does the First Part throw upon the life of the Israelites in exile? Why is the Second Part called the "Apocalypse of the Old Testament"? What Book of the New Testament adopts its imagery? Write an outline of the Book. What lessons has it for us?

DANIEL IN THE KING'S COURT
(World's TemperanceSunday)

Golden Text

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. I Corinthians 16.13

LESSON Daniel 1: verses 8-16, 19, 20 printed MEMORIZE verse 15

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king. 11 Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. 16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *Daniel purposed.* He firmly resolved. "The solemn purpose in our heart to maintain temperance and purity will render us invincible" (*Watkinson*).—*In his heart.* "A great many people purpose to do right, but the trouble with them is that they purpose in their heads, and that doesn't amount to much" (*Moody*).—*He would not defile himself.* The king's dainties might have been offered in sacrifice to idols, or might not have been prepared according to Jewish laws, or might have been the flesh of animals held to be unclean by the Jews. See the law in Dt. 12. 23, 24; Lev. 11. 4-20.—*The wine which he drank.* Part of the king's wine might have been offered in sacrifice to idols. Compare Paul's solution of a similar difficulty, 1 Cor. 10.20, 27-29. Homer speaks of "inflaming wine that weakens both body and mind."—*The prince of the eunuchs.* Ashpenaz, verse 3.

9. *Now God made Daniel to find kindness.* Compare Gen. 29.21. "Man's favor, sought by seeking first God's, is seldom missed."

10. *The king who hath appointed your food and your drink.* Nebuchadnezzar. Read verse 5.—*Endanger my head.* It might be thought that Ashpenaz had enriched himself with what was supplied for the Hebrew youths.

11-12. *The steward.* Hebrew, *Hammelzar*, RVm. This was probably his official title. He was the man who had the immediate oversight of the youths.—*Prove.* Test. Daniel has a plan which will not get the steward into trouble, for the test will prove Dt. 8.3.—*Ten days.* A round number.—*Pulse.* Or, *herbs*, RVm. The word means any vegetable food—probably beans, peas and lentils.

17-18. The experiment proved that the water and the simple fare were the better.—*At the end of the days.* Three years, verse 5.

19–20. *Communed.* Talked. The king was now testing them.—*Therefore stood they before the king.* They were given positions which involved personal attendance upon the king.—*He found them ten times better.* They had the sound mind that dwells in the sound body (*mens sana in corpore sano*). Simple living always results in clearer thinking. "Drinking makes thinking impossible; some day thinking will make drinking impossible."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

8. *He would not defile himself.* In the Second Book of Maccabees we are told that on the king's birthday Jews "were constrained by bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices," and that Eleazar, one of the principal scribes, an aged and noble-looking man, preferred rather to be tortured to death, "leaving his death for an example of noble courage, and a memorial of value, not only unto young men, but unto all his nation." In the following chapter is the celebrated story of the constancy and cruel death of seven brothers and their mother, when they preferred martyrdom to tasting swine's flesh. The brave Judas Maccabæus, with some nine companions, withdrew himself into the wilderness, and "lived in the mountains after the manner of beasts with his company, who fed on herbs continually, lest they should be partakers of the pollution." The tone and object of these narrations are precisely the same as the tone and object of the stories in the Book of Daniel. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Book of Daniel.*

12. *Let them give us pulse to eat.* This was the food to which he was accustomed. The physician at Tiberias told me of a Syrian patient in his hospital so ill that he could not take the lightest nourishment. The nurse reported that he was begging for hard native bread and a cucumber, and believing that the man could not live anyway, the doctor said, "Let him have it." The man began to improve from his first good meal!

20. *The magicians and enchanters in his realm.* Babylonia was the land of magic; and a very extensive literature, dealing with different branches of the subject, has been brought to light during recent years. Demons, or evil spirits, were supposed to be active upon earth, bringing to mankind diseases, misfortunes, and every kind of ill; the heavens were supposed to exercise an influence over the destinies of men and nations. Methods had to be devised for the purpose of dealing with the occult agencies concerned, of interpreting all significant phenomena, and of averting, where this was held to be possible, the evils which they portended. Sorcerers and sorceresses sprang up, who, by means of various magical devices, could invoke the demons at their will. and bring such persons as they chose within their power. On the other hand, priests were ready with means for protecting people who were thus assailed; and many collections of "incantations" have come down to us, each dealing with some particular kind of demonic evil, or providing some particular method of protection against demons. "Fully one-fourth of the portion of Asshurbanipal's library that has been discovered consists of omen tablets of various sizes in which explanations are afforded of all physical peculiarities to be observed in animals and men, of natural phenomena, of the position and movements of the planets and stars, of the incidents and accidents of public and private life—in short, of all possible occurrences and situations." *S. R. Driver,* in *The Book of Daniel.*

A Chaldæan Diviner

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. From what Books have our lessons thus far been taken? How far have we gone in the history of the Northern Kingdom? Of the Southern Kingdom? What great instance of steadfastness of purpose have we studied? What words expressed this firm resolve?

How Daniel Came to Babylon. For our World's Temperance Sunday lesson we study the first chapter of the Book of Daniel. It was after the fall of Samaria,

in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah (606 B. C.) that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, beseiged Jerusalem, and carried back with him to Babylon some of the treasures of the Temple and some Jewish captives. There he directed one of his officers, the prince of the eunuchs, to take the Jewish youths of noble blood who were especially fair and bright, and have them taught the languages and learning of the Chaldeans for three years, and thus educated for his service. Four of these boys were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, to whom were given the Chaldaic names of Belteshazzar, Shadrack, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Cameo of Nebuchadnezzar

The Book of Daniel. See pages 46–48 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of our lesson is in the royal palace at Babylon, when this city on the banks of the Euphrates was at the height of its glory under Nebuchadnezzar. Is it not wonderful that the temple of Nebuchadnezzar has recently been unearthed, and men living in the twentieth century after Christ can walk over the pavement on which Daniel walked seven centuries before Christ? Alluvial soil thrown upon the site of Babylon by the floods from the river covered it in places to a depth of fifty feet, till German archæologists carefully dug through to the foundations of the ancient city. Each brick in Nebuchadnezzar's palace is stamped with his name and royal titles in cuneiform script. The throne hall is an immense room, and the intricacy of the passages, rooms, courts is said to be almost bewildering. In a great pile of débris many inscriptions have been found, among them this statement, "I thought to build unto heaven." We know that the huge walls of the city were three hundred feet high, that the "Hanging Gardens" were one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, that the huge temple of Bel was grander than any of the other ancient temples.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Daniel is thought to have been fourteen years old when he made his firm resolve. He purposed in his heart, and he continued true to that purpose. His self-mastery in youth was the keynote of his masterful life. The time to form such a purpose of being true to principle and loyal to God is in youth.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

In "Old Testament Stories" Laura E. Cragin has the following good introduction to the story of Daniel. Daniel was a beautiful child and as good as he was beautiful. He was taught by his parents to love God, and all his life he tried to please the heavenly Father. While Nebuchadnezzer took the people of Judah as captives to Babylon, he told Ashpenaz, one of his officers, to take the brightest and handsomest boys and bring them to his palace to be trained there to serve him. Daniel, who was then about fourteen years of age, was taken as one of these boys.

It must have been hard for him to leave his home and to go to this distant land, and yet I know that he must have seen much to interest him on the journey. The party with which he traveled crossed a great river and then, instead of the vineyards, the olive and fig trees which grew in his own country, Daniel saw the palm trees, on which dates grow, fields of wheat, barley and rice, and gardens filled with bright flowers. And as they neared Babylon, he saw the merchants with their long lines of horses and camels, carrying goods to the great city. And how wonderful that city, with its immense wall, broad streets and great buildings, must have seemed to the boy. When they reached Babylon, Daniel and the other boys were taken to a large building near the palace where everything was strange and different from what they had had at home. Even their names were changed. Wouldn't it be hard for you to be taken to another country and there perhaps be called Arioch, instead of your own name? Daniel means "God is my Judge," and his parents had given this name to him because they believed in God. But now he was called Belteshazzar, which suggested the name of one of the idols of

the Babylonians. He had three friends among the boys who had come from Jerusalem and their names, also, had beautiful meanings. The name of one was Hananiah, which meant "God is gracious," another was called Mishael, "Who is equal to God," and the third, Azariah, "God is a helper," but now they, too, were given heathen names. Hananiah was called Shadrach, Mishael, Meshach, and Azariah, Abed-nego.

The boys were all kindly treated, however, and food and wine were sent them from the king's own table. But some of this food had been offered to idols and Daniel had been taught that it was wrong for him to eat it. He therefore asked Ashpenaz if he might have simple food. He was so bright and attractive and had been so quick to do all that was asked of him, ever since he left Jerusalem, that Ashpenaz had learned to love him. When he asked to be allowed to eat plain food, instead of the rich meat from the king's table, Ashpenaz wished to grant his request, but he said: "The king has planned for you to have this meat and drink and if, by not taking it, you did not look as well as the other young men, Nebuchadnezzar would be very angry and he might even kill me."

In telling the story, let you pupils see the moral heroism of the lad, and teach the thought of Rabbi Singer's words, p. 436. Call for the chorus of the well known song:

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone;
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.

Ask your pupils how they feel before dinner, after the usual meal, after a Thanksgiving feast, and lead them to say that just enough is far better than too much, and follow with a talk about water based on Dr. Hutchinson's remarks, p. 437.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. You have all heard the saying, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." What does it mean? Is it a good rule? An ancient philosopher, Pythagoras, said, "Whatever people may think of you, do what you think to be right." Is that a good rule to follow? Which rule was Daniel's? Who was Daniel?

For Older Pupils. Is it always right to do right? Is it always right to do what we think is right? Suppose others declare that we are mistaken in our sense of what is right; should we yield to what they advise when we cannot see the matter as they do? Is it right to do what we think is wrong under circumstances where we are persuaded we can not help ourselves? Can a Christian in business say that a certain course is right, but he cannot follow it because all his competitors do the opposite? Is it ever necessary to sin? (After a discussion of Daniel's situation and the principle involved, see Topic I, and a talk about the way he gained his point, ask your pupils whether it would have been right for Daniel, instead of having the way in which he thought was right proved, to have said to himself that he would try the way which he thought was wrong and see how it turned out.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Quit You Like Men, Be Strong

Daniel's Firm Stand. These boys, Daniel and his companions, must have been about fourteen years old at this time, but they certainly did quit themselves like strong, true men. They remained true to their convictions of right, steadfast in their allegiance to Jehovah, under circumstances which might have seemed to excuse a contrary course. How easily they might have argued that in that foreign court they must do as they were bid, that it would be useless to refuse the king's food, that they could only yield to the inevitable!

The question which was to these lads a matter of conscience was in regard to a ceremonial rule. They believed it a sacred duty to keep this rule, and therefore not to have kept it would have been for them a sin. It is evil for that man who eateth with offence, said Paul. The principle at stake, too, was greater than the keeping of one law alone. The king had changed not only their food but their dress, their studies, their very names. Daniel meant "God is my judge"; his new name Belteshazzar meant "May Beltis (a Babylonian goddess) defend the

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king." Everything was done to make these youths forget their nationality and their religion. Had they yielded in the matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols, they would have been renouncing Jehovah their God for the false gods of Babylon.

As regards the ceremonial defilement we in these days agree with Paul, who says, "I am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself"; but we may well profit by the splendid example of fidelity to principle given by these lads.

General Lee's Fidelity to Principle. For fidelity such as Daniel's General Lee was noted. After Appomattox General Grant urged General Lee to adopt a certain course which he himself believed would be for the good of all. General Lee thought otherwise, and General Grant wrote in his memoirs, "I knew there was no use to urge him to do anything against his ideas of what was right."

The Heroism God Asks of All Boys and Girls. Every one of you will at some time or other be called upon to show courage and heroism, in having to say, when occasion demands, a very simple word very distinctly and very decisively —the word "No." How much wretchedness and ruin have been brought into the homes and hearts of men and women, and of boys and girls, because they could not say that word, or because they said it in a half-hearted way, so that it sounded very much like "Yes," and in the end was really turned into "Yes." Learn early to guard yourselves against evil companionship and evil example, and when the temptation comes to you, as come it will, to sin against God's law, be it in matters of truthfulness, or of honesty, or of purity, or of love and gentleness—the moment your conscience whispers "No," let your lips take up the message and proclaim aloud, clearly as with trumpet notes, "No!" Does this seem to you but a mild and weakly form of heroism? It is just what God expects of you, because it is within the range of your powers. Do not underrate what you can do, as boys and girls, because it appears to you little in comparison with what you have heard of the world's renowned heroes and heroines. God asks of us exactly what we can do. He asks of us not according to his measure, but according to our measure. *Simeon Singer*, in *Sermons to Children.*

Little Babu. From a Mission Station in Bombay comes this experience of Little Babu. Babu has learned to love Jesus, but no one else in his home or in the homes near him loves him yet. He can talk to his mother about Jesus, but he dares not mention that name to his father, for his father worships an ugly stone image. His father sings songs to this image, and reads stories and poetry about it to his family. He offers some of his food to it, and he thinks it is alive. He believes it is God living on the earth. Besides this, he has a long string of beads which he counts, saying the names of different idols for each bead. The more frequently he counts them, the more holy he feels himself to be.

Now, if this father were to find out that Babu loves Jesus, and wants to become his little disciple, that he no longer believes in the image, then the father would be very angry. He would probably beat Babu, burn his Bible, and try to force him to bow down to the image.

One day Babu told us of something about which he is troubled. Babu's story is this. He is in a drilling class, and it is the custom once a week for all the boys, in their drill, to bow before the image of the monkey-god, who is supposed to give them strength. When the drill master is not standing watching them, Babu passes by without bowing to the idol; but when the drill-master is looking on, he is afraid to pass by, and so he bows as the other boys do, though in his heart he tells us he says: "Oh! God, I know this is only an image, made by man, and thou art the true God in heaven."

Poor boy! He knows it is wrong to bow down to the image, but he is afraid to stand up for the true God. He might be turned out of his class, and then his father would hear of it. Now does not Babu need our prayers?

The Student's Panoply. If you put together the two virtues of courage and moderation you have a panoply for most of the temptations to which students are assailed. If you are asked to go into a saloon and drink, don't be afraid to say you do not indulge in the use of alcohol. Your comrade will respect your courage and temperance, and you will have lived up to your own ideals. It is generally on an occasion like that where the fellow is put to a test. Both virtues are assailed at the same time, and his future will depend on how he meets the temptation. For we form habits by successive voluntary acts. And in the end these habits take control of us so that we can not help ourselves. *President Schurman*, in an *Address* to the *Students at Cornell University.*

II. Let them Give us Water to Drink

The Best Drink.

"If water makes the flowers bloom
And spreads the sturdy tree,
And makes all nature sweet and bright,
It is the drink for me."

A Million Water Drinkers Wanted. At the International Sunday School Convention held in Chicago, it was stated that one of the goals to be achieved was one million total abstinence pledge signers in 1914–15 and yearly for ten years thereafter.

Why Do We Drink? Why do we drink? Because our bodies are walking aquariums, and we have to keep the protoplasm of our cells swimming in water or it won't live. So long as we drink only water, there is little danger of our taking too much—except by drowning ourselves; but when we begin to mix things with it, trouble begins. Certainly on general principles it would appear that the simplest, cheapest, and most rational thing would be to take our necessary daily three pints of water "straight", without mixture of any sort—clear, fresh, and sparkling from the spring; but for some strange reason, man has never been satisfied to do this, but must add something to the water before he will call it a drink. And he doesn't appear to have been particularly lucky in his additions.

A large part of our drinking water has always been taken in the form of mixtures with other substances. These beverages are always much more expensive than the plain water, often quite troublesome to secure and prepare, have little or no food value, are of doubtful effect in moderation, and usually injurious in excess. Why they should ever have come into such universal use, in all races and in all ages of the world, is one of the standing puzzles of human nature. *Woods Hutchinson*, in *Sunday School Times*.

Dean Farrar quotes to good purpose here the lesson which Milton reads in the story of Samson:

O madness! to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God, with these forbidden, made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook!

For the Sake of a Sound Body. All the world knows that food and drink wonderfully affect body and mind, that intoxicating drinks and sumptuous diet are harmful to both. Insurance companies have proved this; their tables show that intemperate habits shorten life. Physicians not only see the direct ravages made on the body by excessive eating and drinking, but they know that it is more difficult to cure a moderate drinker of disease not traceable to drink than it is a total abstainer. Dr. Woods Hutchinson, in "A Physician's Straight Talk on Alcohol" in the *Sunday School Times*, says: "An amount of alcohol which one man might seem to consume with impunity may be seriously injurious to another; and a daily consumption which will produce not the slightest symptom of intoxication, or even of discomfort, or headache, may be slowly and fatally damaging the cells of your liver or kidneys. The conviction is growing among pathologists that the tissues of many moderate drinkers are damaged in this slow, insidious way, without their being in the slightest degree conscious of any injury or even discomfort. You can never quite tell what alcohol had done to you until the post-mortem—and then the question won't interest you much."

For the Sake of Wisdom and Understanding. A popular lecturer tells how he once went into a New York City restaurant, frequented by business men for lunch. At a nearby table were seated two couples, beside them a bucket of ice, probably cooling a bottle of champagne. The round table in the center was occupied by eight alert, well-dressed business men. The woman who was manager of the restaurant and who was known to the lecturer explained that those men were officers of a great manufacturing corporation, accustomed to lunch there every day.

"They seem to have no wine on the table," he remarked, knowing well that the salaries they received permitted them to have whatever they wanted.

"No, and you could not persuade them to take wine at this time of day", was the immediate reply.

"But why not at this time of the day?" was his puzzled question.

"Because they need all the wits they've got", was the illuminating answer.

The lecturer was not a drinking man, but he had held that whether a man drank or not was his own concern, and no one else's business. But, living by his wits, as every teacher must, he felt that he needed all he had for his work, and he decided then and there never to take another drop of liquor. *Unknown.*

Know ye not that your Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit?

To man, propose this test:
Thy body at its best,
How far can it project the soul on its lone way?

Browning.

III. The Beginnings of Habit

Every Act is a Preparation for Some Other Act.

No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
A record written by fingers ghostly,
As a blessing or a curse, and mostly
In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it.

In these words Longfellow tells us that no act is without its influence upon other acts, a victory prepares the way for another victory, and a defeat makes easy a second defeat.

Daniel refused the king's wines and meat, and his steady adherence to right principle gave him the courage he possessed when he entered the lion's den. When the Duke of Wellington said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the cricket-field at Eton, he meant that when his soldiers were schoolboys at Eton they were in training for the great victory they were to win in manhood. The Japanese astonished the world by their victory over the Russians, but their victory was made possible only by the marvelous preparation which had been going on for years in their own little island home.

The Immense Significance of First Acts. To believe that the first equivocal departures from right thinking and acting are matters of indifference has cost many a one his soul. We can never overrate the immense significance of the first acts which lead on to habit. In physics we see how the slightest crease or scratch has a marvelous determining value. A tear in a sheet of paper accurately follows the line of a directive crease; the crease may be faint in the extreme, but the tear will start there and follow the indented line. If we file a groove in the surface of a glass rod, the slightest jar will divide it, and divide it at the groove although it may be only a scratch. The first trifling acts in a human life possess a similar significance; they exercise on the future a shaping influence altogether beyond their numerical and immediate importance. The power of a deed repeated a few times is always immense and often final. It settles the lines on which after-thoughts find it easy to follow, it traces the channel in which henceforth emotion naturally flows. The physiologist tells us that it deeply affects the particles, tissues and nerves of the body, establishing tendency. The psychologist discovers how it imparts a bent to the powers and passions of the mental and emotional nature. And the moralist emphasizes its predominant action on the will, conscience, and character. The first irregular decisions and deeds make the path of transgression easy, the retracing of the steps so difficult that those only who make the attempt know the difficulty. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson*, in *Sermon on Presumptuous Sins.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

It is said that statistics from the alcoholic wards of the hospitals show that two-thirds of the patients took their first drink, not because they felt any craving for it, or even thought it would taste good, but because they saw others doing it, thought it a manly thing to do, or were afraid they would be laughed at if they didn't. Daniel's example shows the true manliness and courage.

One-eighth of the adults in Denmark belong to total abstinence unions. When you boys are all adults, what will be the proportion here?

A young man who went with John Wesley into a room provided with all table luxuries said to him, "There is not much self-denial here, Mr. Wesley." "No," the preacher replied, "but there is a fine field for its exercise." Possibly, like that young man and like Daniel in the king's court, you are so situated that you also have a fine field for the purpose.

These four boys were away from the restraints of home, but they remained true to home principles. They showed their colors at the first. It is always easier to take the right stand in the beginning than it is to shift afterwards.

Our Prayer. We would strive for the mastery, we would be temperate in all things, O God. Thy temple we would keep undefiled, a fit abode for Thy Spirit. May this be our test in all things, that what we cannot enjoy while thinking of thee is not for us. With thy help we will take heed to our ways now in our youth, we will walk in the paths of prudence all our days, and to thee shall be the thanks, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Daniel. Pages 46–48.
2. The Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How was God's first message to Jonah received? 2. How did Jonah attempt to flee from God's presence? 3. What is said in Psalm 139.12 and Jer. 23.23–24 about the impossibility of escaping from his Spirit? 4. In the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, what words of the householder might be well asked of Jonah? 5. What, in brief, had happened in the Northern Kingdom between the reigns of Ahab and Jeroboam II? (*Guide*, p. 442.) 6. What can you learn about Nineveh? (*Guide*, p. 442.) 7. What was the sackcloth? (*Guide*, p. 441.) What is the prophecy in regard to Nineveh of Zeph. 2.13–15? 9. What reference did Jesus make to Jonah? (Mt. 12.39–41; Lk. 11.29–32.)

Questions to Think About. 1. How did God's word come to Jonah? 2. Why did the people of Nineveh put on sackcloth? 3. Why were the beasts made to fast? 4. What does the question of verse 7 mean? 5. Why was Jonah angry over the pardon of the Ninevites? (*Guide*, ¶ 4, p. 440.) 7. How did Jonah show rebelliousness? Self-sacrifice? Selfishness? Bigotry? Cowardliness? Courage? Pettiness? Truthfulness? Obedience? Pride? Contemptibleness? 8. What is your class doing to help in making Christian disciples of other nations?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory the latter part of Jonah 4.2 and John 3.16. In your Biographical Book of Four Prophets, write the Story of Daniel.

Questions upon the Book of Jonah. Whose son was the prophet Jonah? Where was his home? In which of the two kingdoms? What prediction of his is recorded in 2 K. 14.25? In whose reign was it fulfilled? In whose reign did he live? Who was the author of the Book of Jonah? Is there any indication in the Book itself? Why is the Book assigned by many scholars to the period following the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah? In what ways was the narrowness of the Jews of this time shown? What was the purpose of the Book of Jonah as regards intolerance towards foreigners?

Tell the story that is told in the Book. Write an outline of the Book. What does the fact that it is classed among the prophetical rather than historical books indicate? What two views are held in regard to the Book? As an allegory or parable how is it interpreted? Compare the account of the sea monster with the figurative language of Jeremiah 51.34 and 44. What value has the Book as a parable? What beauties can you see in it as literature?

What are the great lessons of the Book which prove its inspiration? What lessons has the Book for you?

JONAH A MISSIONARY TO NINEVEH
(Foreign Missionary Lesson)

Golden Text

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28.19, 20.

LESSON Jonah 3.1-4.11: verses 3.1-10 printed MEMORIZE verse 3.10

1 And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; 8 but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The word of Jehovah came unto Jonah.* "Whenever we are conscious of an urgent voice which says to us, over and over, You ought! You ought! it is likely that we are listening to the word of the Lord" (*Hodges*).—*Jonah.* Jonah, the son of Amittai, lived in the time of Jeroboam II, 2. K. 14.25. See p. 43 of our Introduction.—*The second time.* See the first two chapters of Jonah. "It is God's custom when he gives a servant a command to a definite duty, and the servant disobeys, and, by the goodness of his God after his fall and repentance is brought back to himself and to readiness to obey, that the old command is invariably repeated" (*Stimson*).—"Jonah says to himsel', the first time, 'I ken how it'll be. After I've cried mysel' hoarse that Nineveh's to be destroyed, they'll begin to weep, and the Almighty'ill change his mind and no destroy them after a'. It's aye his way gin folk repent. He's of great kindness and slow to anger, but he should keep to his word. He takes no thought upon me, and what a like fool I make o' mysel', crying that folk'll be destroyed when they winna be. It seems as though the Almighty didna ken his ain position to gang back on his word because folk commence to weep. But I'm his servant, and I ken my ain place; I'll no see him place himsel' in a wrong position, and I'll no see him place me in ane neither'" (*Sandy Scott's Bible Class*).

2–3. *Preach.* Or, *cry*, RVm.—*So Jonah arose and went.* He had learned that he must obey, but he had not yet learned that God's plan is always wise and right, 4.1–3.—*An exceeding great city.* Hebrew, *a city great unto God*, RVm. See verse 11.—*Of three days' journey.* A day's journey may be estimated as twenty miles. "A diameter of sixty miles would be most unlikely; not so a circumference of sixty miles, for a population of 600,000, 4.11." See the Geographical Background.

4. *And said.* Did he speak the language of the Assyrians? "The words forty, days, overthrown, are sufficiently similar in Assyrian and Hebrew. They would

by conscience's aid readily catch the meaning of his cry. Equally brief was the message on Belshazzar's wall: Numbered, weighed, divided" (*Wood*).

5. *The people of Nineveh believed God.* They believed that Jonah told the truth, that God would destroy Nineveh,—*Put on sackcloth.* See below.

6. *He arose from his throne, and put his robe from him.* These details are given to make more impressive the king's mourning. "The word translated *robe* means *ample dress*; it is used of any dress which is distinctive: described by Layard as flowing, fringed, tasseled, girdled, hooded. An Assyrian king would wear also a conical tiara, necklace, ear-rings, and gemmed armlets. The change from such a throne and such attire to sackcloth and ashes figures strikingly the mental change from pride to penitence" (*Wood*).

7–8. *Published.* Hebrew, *said*, RVm.—*And beast.* "Neglected by their owners, the cattle filled the air with their groanings. Compare Joel 1.20. The Persians are said by Herodotus to have clipped the hair of the horses and baggage animals that they might seem to share in the mourning for a general" (*Dummelow*).—*From the violence that is in his hand.* Nahum (3.1) describes Nineveh as a bloody city, full of lies and robbery.

9–10. *Who knoweth whether God.* Perhaps God.—*Will not turn away from his fierce anger. God saw their works. . . . and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.* God is here spoken of in terms that would befit man. We can think of God as changing his purpose, but not of repenting a purpose formed. "God may relax the bow he has bent without fickleness; regret that he bent it, this he cannot do." "If in the spirit of sympathy a preacher tells a young man he is going to darkness and destruction, and if the word by its tone and truth arrests the attention and quickens the conscience of that young man so that he turns his face towards the light of heaven and the love of Jesus, is not the prophecy fulfilled? Yes, it is fulfilled in the truest, noblest sense, it has entered into the young man's life". (*Jordan*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3.5. *Put on sackcloth.* The mourning dress, sackcloth, was in truth a sack, which was thrown over the person and extended down to the knees, but which, nevertheless, had armholes for the admission of the arms. It derives its name from the Arabic verb to tear asunder, because in the moment of the person's grief it was torn from the neck down to the breast, and sometimes as far as the girdle. The materials were a coarse, dark cloth of goat's hair. *B. A. John.*

In ancient Chinese ceremonial the dress for the deepest mourning consisted of a fillet twisted from undressed hemp and worn upon the head, and a coat of undressed fibre bound round the loins with a hempen rope. The coat was therefore what we call sackcloth· that material is worn by mourners in China even at the present day.

4.1. *It displeased Jonah exceedingly.* We have not been trained to believe ourselves an elect people; nor have we suffered at the hands of the heathen. Yet, at least, we have contemporaries and fellow-Christians among whom we may find still alive many of the feelings against which the Book of Jonah was written. Take the oriental churches of today. Centuries of oppression have created in them an awful hatred of the infidel, beneath whose power they are hardly suffered to live. That their oppressors share a common humanity with themselves is a sense they have nearly lost. For centuries they have had no spiritual intercourse with them; to try to convert a Mohammedan has been for 1200 years a capital crime. It is not wonderful· that Eastern Christians should have long lost power to believe in the conversion of infidels, and to feel that anything is due but their destruction. I once asked a cultured and devout layman of the Greek Church, Why then did God create so many Mohammedans? The answer came hot and fast—To fill up Hell! *George Adam Smith*, in *The Minor Prophets.*

4.7 *God prepared a worm.* On warm days when a small rain falls, black caterpillars are generated in great numbers on this plant, which in one night so suddenly and so often cut off its leaves that only their bare ribs remain; which I have often observed with much wonder, as if it were a copy of that destruction of old at Nineveh. *Pusey*, quoted by *Eiselen.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When God gave Samuel an unpleasant commission, what did he do? What other people have we seen obedient to God's call? What

does the story of Ruth teach concerning God and the alien? What great prophet had prayed that he might die? What was his reason for desiring death?

The Fortunes of the Northern Kingdom from Ahab to Jeroboam II. In the fifteenth year of Amaziah, the son and successor of Joash in Judah, Jeroboam II began to reign in the Kingdom of Israel. Between Ahab, the king of Israel in the time of the prophet Elijah, and Jeroboam II, the king in the time of the prophet Jonah, there were five kings: Ahaziah, whose reign was brief; Jehoram, his brother, who waged wars with the Moabites and with the Syrians; Jehu, the ruthless reformer, who slew Jehoram and exterminated Ahab's house, and who, according to the Assyrian inscriptions, paid tribute to Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king: Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, under whom the northern kingdom was reduced to a subject kingdom of Syria; and Jehoash, in whose reign Israel partly regained her independence.

In the Reign of Jeroboam II. Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, had a long, prosperous reign, 781–740 B. C. Like Solomon, he aspired to make his kingdom a world-power. He won back the province of Gilead on the east, and extended the borders of his empire "from the entrance of Hamath," the gorge between the Lebanons, to "the Sea of the Arabah," to the lower end of the Dead Sea.

Jonah, the son of Amittai, seems to have been the friend and counselor of Jeroboam II, 2 K. 14.25. He is the subject, though not the author, of the Book of Jonah. To understand our lesson today the entire Book of Jonah must be studied. Turn to pp. 43–46, and read carefully the information there given in regard to the Book.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Nineveh. Opposite to Mosul, the well-known emporium of trade on the right bank of the Upper Tigris, two high, artificial mounds now lift themselves from the otherwise level plain. The more northerly takes the name of Kuyunjik, or "little lamb," after the Turkish village which couches pleasantly upon its northeastern slope. The other is called in the popular dialect Nebi Yunus, "Prophet Jonah," after a mosque dedicated to him, which used to be a Christian church; but the official name is Nineveh. These two mounds are bound to each other on the west by a broad brick wall, with a circumference in all of about nine English miles. The interval, including the mounds, was covered with buildings, whose ruins still enable us to form some idea of what was for centuries the wonder of the world. Upon terraces and superstructions of enormous breadth rose storied palaces, arsenals, barracks, libraries, and temples. A lavish water system spread in all directions from canals, with massive embankments and sluices. Gardens were lifted into mid-air, filled with rich plants and rare and beautiful animals. Alabaster, silver, gold, and precious stones relieved the dullness of brick and flashed sunlight from every frieze and battlement. The surrounding walls were so broad that chariots could roll abreast on them. The gates, and especially the river gates, were very massive.

From Israel to Nineveh.

All this was Nineveh proper, whose glory the Hebrews envied and over whose fall more than one of their prophets exult. But this was not the Nineveh to which our author saw Jonah come. Beyond the walls were great suburbs, and beyond the suburbs other towns, league upon league of dwellings, so closely set upon the plain as to form one vast complex of population, which is known to Scripture as "The Great City." To judge from the ruins which still cover the ground, the circumference must have been about sixty miles, or three days' journey. *George Adam Smith*, in *The Minor Prophets.*

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

At the World's Sunday School Convention in Zürich two years ago it was confidently asserted by many of the speakers that the Sunday Schools are to be one of the chief forces in conquering the world for Christ. In large letters over the front of the organ facing the delegates were the words, "The Sunday School and the

Great Commission." "There is a world, for which Christ died. There is to be a conquest of the world. There is the Sunday-school, to win the conquest, and this includes the child, who is greater than the world." "It is because we have this priceless, ageless and powerful Book as our weapon that we hope for victory. To teach the Bible, to teach it intelligently and faithfully, is to conquer the world." Sunday-school teachers realize their obligation and their privilege. But not all Sunday-school teachers are arousing their pupils to the fact that they must have a share in carrying out Christ's command. They should realize that to be a Christian at all is to be a missionary worker,

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Begin with the great city of Nineveh, p. 442. One day the people had gathered to hear a man talk. He was a stranger who had come to them from afar. His words were very startling. "Only forty days more," he declared, "before Nineveh shall be destroyed." This was the message which God had sent to these people because they were very wicked. God was warning them so that they might repent and be forgiven before it was too late. Jonah was the one whom God chose to give this message. When Jonah first learned what God wanted him to do he did not want to go, for he did not care anything about those heathen people in the foreign land. He tried to run away from his duty, but again God told him to go to Nineveh and preach to them, and this time Jonah obeyed. Finish the story, including Jonah's anger when God forgave the people, the story of the gourd, and especially the words of Jonah 4.11.

Gem with Story of Jonah.

Then tell your pupils that God still has pity for his children in foreign lands who have not heard his words. Call for the Golden Text and explain its meaning for your pupils. Ernest and Polly (in the Picture Story Paper) were talking about this text one day.

"They couldn't go into all the world, mother," said Ernest, "for all the world wasn't discovered yet." "Well," said Polly, "they could go into all the world they knew about, couldn't they?"

"That's so, said Ernest," and maybe he meant those words for other folks besides the disciples." "You are right," said Ernest's mother. "Those words are meant for us today just as much as they were meant for the disciples long ago."

"But mother, I don't understand yet," Ernest declared. "We can't go into the world and preach the gospel! Polly and I can't."

"Suppose you don't try to understand all at once," said Ernest's mother. "I have an idea that you will understand before the week is out."

On Thursday company came to Ernest's home, a missionary from Japan. Polly and Ernest talked to her about their text. "Everyone can't go into foreign lands," said the missionary. "Dear me, what would happen if they did? Your place is right here at home; Polly's place is right in her home; but you are preaching in foreign lands just the same." "How?" asked both children at once, for this seemed strange. "By helping the missionaries." "Oh, you mean by putting money in the missionary box?" asked Polly. "But that is just a little bit." "Yes, but there are many hundreds who are doing just what you are, and when it is all collected we have a great deal of money to help on the work—see?"

Give your pupils these verses (by John Todd) to learn. Call for them next week and whenever you have a missionary offering.

Little dimes and nickels,
Will our servants be,
To carry God's sweet message,
Far across the sea.

Little dimes and nickels,
We will gladly give,
Lost and hopeless children
Then may know, and live.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Raimon Lull was a philosopher and poet of the thirteenth century who felt called to preach to the Moslems in Africa. After spending nine years in mastering the Arabic language, he engaged passage on board a vessel bound for Tunis, but was seized with such terror that he let the vessel sail without him. Then he was overcome with remorse, and, though prostrated by nervous fear, begged to be taken aboard the next vessel. A second time his heart failed him, and remorse tortured him. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," he cried, and his third attempt to sail was successful.

Many centuries before him, a man in the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the name of Jonah was called to preach to the heathen in far distant Nineveh, but he could not bring himself to obey the call. His reason was different from that of Lull's; what was it? Instead of starting eastward, what did he do? Did remorse overtake him? How was he given a second chance?

For Older Pupils. Begin with a consideration of the Book of Jonah as a whole, and then by questions bring out the story of the first two chapters. See p. 43.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A Second Chance

The Word of Jehovah Came unto Jonah the Second Time. "Jonah had thrown away a great opportunity for service. He had allowed his fear and his sloth and his selfish shrinking to win the victory, as people so often do, when the calls to self-sacrificing service reach their ears. Jonah had so little hope of a second chance that he did not even ask for it. He assumed that God counted him unworthy to be entrusted with any high office after his failure and flight. Yet the Word of Jehovah came to him the second time.

Let us go to God and ask him for the new chance. We have lost battles; there is time to fight one more and win. We have missed opportunities. It is not too late to seek new ones, and to use them better. You have a second chance."

A Parable of Grace. You have seen a log floating down the river in the Spring-time when the stream was full. Presently the stream abated and shrank to a mere trickle, and the log lay blistering in the sun, high and dry. But it did not remain there for ever. By and by a spate came roaring down from the mountains and replenished the river and flooded the dry bed, and the log floated and resumed its progress towards the distant sea. Ere long, perhaps, it got stranded again when the flood was spent and the stream ran low; but there was always a fresh flood, and, because the log was in the river-bed and not on the bank, it always floated again and was borne on its way. It was in the river-bed, and therefore it was as sure of reaching the sea as though it were already there.

And this is a parable of grace. The stream runs low and we get stranded, but the flood comes down from the Hills of God, and lifts us and bears us onward—if only we be in the river-bed. Commit yourself to the grace of God, and rest with a quiet heart upon his faithfulness in every time of weakness. *Dr. David Smith,* in *Man's Need of God.*

Let the Evil Die.

Yes, let them pass, the ills of yesterday,—
The deed unlovely and the speech unjust,
The whispered hint-betrayal of our trust
That struck Faith's chalice from our lips away,
And trailed her graceful garments in the dust;
Our own default,—the good we might have done;
The battles lost that patience might have won,
The "word in season" that we did not say!
But let them pass, the things that grieved us sore;
Behind his back God casts the sins of men,
Repented of, remembering them no more,
And shall not we who have been born again,
And by his wondrous grace to him brought nigh,
Hold fast the good, and let the evil die?

M. A. Maitland.

"The University of Another Chance." This is the name which the "students"—convicts—of the Washington State Reformatory have given their institution. Is it not a good one? It is one of several penal institutions whose men a large corporation gladly employs, for it has learned that they make good workmen and can be trusted. "The time is coming, as enlightenment increases," wrote Mr. Pinkerton, the well known detective, "when men will come out of prison sounder in body and mind than they went in, and with hands and heads trained to useful and profitable occupations. In this way we shall gradually eliminate the habitual criminal, while better educational methods and a clearer recognition by the State of its duty to the child can not fail to reduce materially the proportion of first offenders."

II Universal Brotherhood

The Universal Fatherhood of God. The people of Jonah's day had much the same opinion of the heathen which was held by some of our own grandfathers. It is not possible, they said, that anybody can be saved unless he is saved exactly as we are. Men, indeed, are still living who hold that every pagan who perishes in his paganism goes without delay into the torments of the damned. In their opinion the sole motive of foreign missionaries is to hold back the heathen from that bottomless pit into which they are tragically marching, as the Russian soldiers marched into the fatal ditch of Schweidnitz. God is the Father only of us Christians. Nothing is more remarkable about Jonah than this fact, that in those dark days he had caught even this small glimpse of the universal Fatherhood of God.

The trouble with Jonah was not that he disbelieved in the love of God for Nineveh, but that he disapproved of it. He was one of that considerable class of people, some of whom are in holy orders, who are more stern than God. Jonah had a strong prejudice against foreign missions, but it was based, not upon the notion that the heathen might get along very well without the true religion, but upon a decided objection to the well-being of the heathen. He was afraid that a foreign missionary might convert the Ninevites; and that, to his mind, would be the calamity of calamities. *Dean George Hodges*, in *In this Present World.*

Jonah's Unbrotherliness. The Prophet Jonah was both the elder son and the unmerciful servant of the Old Testament. He was the elder son. For, as he came nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked him what these things meant. And he said to him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry and would not go in; therefore, his father came out and entreated him. And the Lord entreated Jonah to leave his withered gourd and his sunbeaten booth, and to come in and share the joy of the spared city. Jonah was the unmerciful servant of that other New Testament parable also. O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? *Dr. Alexander Whyte*, in *Bible Characters.*

Brothers. After one of those necessarily rare occasions on which the highest officials had visited the outskirts of their company's extensive property, an old and a young foreman were flattening their noses against the boiler-room window watching the automobile whisking away the dignitaries.

"Say, Pat," said the younger, "which one was the president, the tall one under the pancake cap or the little one inside the big fur coat?"

"Dennis, boy," said the old fellow, "I have worked here many a year, but I don't know; what is the use of bothering your head about it, anyway? Did you notice, they peeped into the furnace standing way back against the wall, and they squinted up at the stack to see the smoke we made, and they walked around the coal pile to find out if it was all there, and, mind you, one of them scratched the old ash-cart mule kind of friendly like between the ears—but never a look or a word they had for the likes of us." *Paul Lupke*, in *The Survey.*

A Lesson from the Hindu. A Hindu saying is: "The narrow-minded ask: Is this one of our tribe, or is he a stranger? But to those who are of a noble mind the whole world is but one family." Wu Ting Fang gives us credit for noble-mindedness. He says: "To good Americans not only are the citizens of America born equal, but the citizens of the world are born equal." Do we deserve the praise?

Shoulder to Shoulder. "Now then, Highlanders, shoulder to shoulder!" was the cheery and inspiriting word of command that rang out above the roar of battle as a gallant soldier led his Scotchmen to the charge; and every man, not for him-

self, but for England, rushed forward as with only "one shoulder" in the regiment, and with the irresistible might of their courage and their valor swept the broken ranks of their defeated foes before them. Oh! my friends, let us hear the voice of our great Captain ringing across this world's great battlefield, and summoning us to give up our petty jealousies and our miserable little differences. "Soldiers of the Cross, shoulder to shoulder!" against all the evil, all the falseness, all the baseness, all the meanness, all the impurity, all the pride, all the folly, all the mighty army of sin that the Prince of Darkness has set in battle array against us. *T.T. Shore, in Saint George for England.*

III Foreign Missions: Make Disciples of all the Nations

A Command for All Times. The Great Commission was undoubtedly spoken to the Church in all ages, and is a command which is equally in force at all times. Christ did not address one generation of his followers, and excuse another; he intended rather that this divine obligation to "disciple the nations" should be one of those supreme factors of history which are alive forevermore. It gathers new meaning and power, however, from the historic environment and the providential conditions which surround it in various ages of the world. *James S. Dennis, in The Modern Call of Missions.*

His Limit. "I'll give you my notion of things," repeatedly declared a sturdy old planter of Civil War time who bestowed much of his wisdom on a contributor to "Harper's Magazine." "I go first for Greenville, then for Greenville District, then for the upcountry, then for South Carolina, then for the South, then for the United States—and after that I don't go for anything. I've no use for Englishmen, Turks, and Chinese!"

How Dr. Chalmers Felt about his Call to Make Disciples. Dr. Thomas Chalmers came to the Tron Kirk, and the Glasgow streets were black with crowds that gathered to hear him. But while he delivered those eloquent discourses in the blaze of popularity, his heart was much discouraged, and on this night in particular he was despondent. On the way home, slipping as unobserved as he could through the shadows of the streets, one of his elders quietly took his place beside him, and asked if he might walk a little way home with him tonight.

"Yes, indeed," said the doctor, "I'll be glad of your company, for oh! I am so sad and discouraged tonight."

"Do you remember the sermon you preached three Sabbaths ago in the evening?" rejoined his companion. "Well, I know of one soul brought to the Savior through that sermon that night."

The great and good man stopped, clasped his hands, and looked up to the stars, "Oh, thank God! Do you know I was wondering whether, after all, God had really sent me to Glasgow? but now that one soul has accepted the Lord Jesus as I have preached him, I dare believe he has sent me here, and it is a joy to my heart." *Expository Times.*

What a Dollar Will Do. A missionary states that a dollar will accomplish the following service:

1. Keep a child from starving for fifty days.
2. Feed and clothe an orphan for twenty-five days.
3. Pay for the education of an orphan for twenty-five days.
4. Feed a poor widow for a month.
5. Furnish a teacher for untaught children two weeks.
6. Send out a Bible-woman for two weeks, when she may brighten fifty homes and two hundred souls.
7. Send out an evangelist for one week, who may reach at least fourteen villages and fourteen hundred souls.
8. Send out a colporteur with the Bible for twelve days.
9. Buy fifty copies of the Gospel in any language.
10. Buy twelve New Testaments in any language.
11. Buy three Bibles in any language.
12. Set in motion incalculable influence.

A Personal Application of the Command. We associate the command with China and India and Africa, but we should also bring it right down to a personal application within the sphere of our daily life and influence: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Does "go" mean "stay"? Does "ye" include the Christians of our day? Does "preach the gospel to

every creature" mean to spend one year, four years, perchance more, in the same home, in the same social circle, belonging to the same organization, in the same college, or in any other place where we are exercising our influence, and to speak of all other subjects of importance but to leave out of the conversation the supreme subject, the claims of Christ upon the individual? We do not so interpret this command of Jesus Christ. To some it will mean that down in the troubled heart of our great cities they will be bringing the messages of the peace and power of Christ. But to all clearly in the intent of Christ his command means that we shall be weaving into our conversation naturally day by day in the sphere of our calling his surpassing excellencies and claims. *John R. Mott*, in *Northfield Echoes*.

How the Great Commission has been Carried Out. What are the facts? It is twenty centuries since the command of universal obligation was uttered by the Master, but today the population of the heathen world is fifteen hundred millions of people, while the total missionary force of the Christian Church is only nineteen thousand ordained missionaries, or one to every sixty-seven thousand of the population. If Great Britain had only the same proportion of ordained ministers as the whole of Christendom, there would be in Great Britain only thirty-two ministers. It is estimated that of the population of the heathen world to whom I have referred, 250,000,000 have never heard the name of Christ. *Lord Balfour.*

The Spirit of God is the Great Missioner. As one surveys the enormous task involved in making Christ known to all the world, and realizes the inadequacy of human agents and agencies as well as of human policy and strategy, the first impression is that the Church is totally unable to discharge its overwhelming responsibility. The next and dominant impression is that Almighty God is able, and that the Church must be led to avail itself of his limitless resources to a degree hitherto unknown since that vital age—the first generation of Christianity. Missionaries, native Christian workers, and leaders of the missionary activities on the home field, while they differ on nearly all questions pertaining to plans, means, and methods, are absolutely united in the conviction that the world's evangelization is a divine enterprize, that the Spirit of God is the great Missioner, and that only as he dominates the work and workers can we hope for success in the undertaking to carry the knowledge of Christ to all people. They believe that he gave the missionary impulse to the early Church, and that today all true mission work must be inaugurated, directed, and sustained by him. *John R. Mott*, in *The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions.*

America's Task. After a visit to America, Dr. Robert F. Horton went back to England and in an address he spoke these burdening, and at the same time cheering, words:

"The idea gradually entered my mind and took possession of it—the idea that America, the great New World of English-speaking people, is probably destined to be the immediate instrument by which Christ intends to make his Gospel known to the rest of the world, and to establish his Kingdom over all the nations and races of the world. The idea was quite new to me. It entered my mind unexpectedly with the force of a revelation. It was new to me because I had always assumed that the main responsibility of giving the Gospel to the world must rest with Europe, where Christianity has been in possession from the beginning.

When I thought for the first time that it is not the dear old country at home that is to be privileged to bring the world to Christ, but it is this young country, lifting up its head in the strength of a great purpose, and with the sense of a Divine Spirit within it, that is to accomplish the task—then a great sigh of relief seemed to go up from my heart, and a hope sprang up which I trust will never again fade away."

After describing the meeting at Kansas City of the Student Volunteers, Dr. Horton told of the wonderful work and possibilities of the movement, and then he showed how America had been guided thoughout her history by the hand of God, and given the opportunity for developing those qualities necessary for the great task of world evangelization—strength, energy, activity, alacrity, passion, a readiness to undertake great tasks. I wish I could give you all his message; here is a small portion:

"Since the last quadrennial congress of this Student Movement held in Rochester four years ago, the actual number who have sailed is 1466—1466 missionaries in four years from the colleges of America! That is twice as many as from all the rest of the world!

On Saturday morning after I had addressed that audience upon the subject of "The Message," and an address had also been given on the subject of "The Messenger," the meeting closed, and then a rally was held on the floor of this vast hall of the actual volunteers, the students in that convention who had offered themselves and intended eventually to sail as missionaries. They gathered on the floor of that hall, 1500 young men and women, all of them consecrated to the missionary work! It was one of the most moving sights that I had ever seen. It was difficult to repress one's emotion as one looked upon their faces and saw the quiet, steady purpose in their faces, as if they had counted the cost—the strong manhood of America, the intelligent womanhood of America; not lads, not mere youthful enthusiasts. They looked like steadfast men and women, who had dedicated themselves to the work.

What struck me is the way these American students are trying to grip the problem of evangelizing the world. They have study circles in these colleges which have been growing in recent years at an almost incredible rate. During the last four years the number engaged in these study circles has risen from 29,300 to 40,000. No one in the movement is satisfied with that number; but what an amazing number it seems to us—40,000 students in the colleges of America setting themselves to study the missionary problem, trying to grasp the situation in order to be ready to carry out the commission of their Master! It was to me a thought of overwhelming significance that so large a number of young men and women of the New World were thus concentrating their lives on the great enterprize of bringing this world to Christ.

Let me also remind you how America has brought this Student Movement, not only into our own country, but literally into the whole world. Apart from the Student Volunteer Movement, the Christian Student Movement has grown up, and in every college and university throughout the world a little body of Christian students is gathered together—for the sake of the college in the first instance, and for the sake of the world in the second instance. All through the universities in England and on the Continent and in the East the Student Movement has spread. During the four years referred to, 300 additional associations have been formed, and 20,000 members have been enlisted, so that now there are 2300 associations and 156,000 students and professors in the universities of the world, gathered together as a Christian force, and America has led them, and America is leading them. This is the force—156,000 of the young educated men and women of the world—that is preparing for the true Armageddon. For the true Armageddon is not a great battle of destruction, but a great battle of salvation, a victory of Christ over the nations of the world, the gaining of the world for the Kingship of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Of what use has been our study of the Old Testament this year if we think that it is speaking only about Israel, and do not see that it is speaking just as clearly about us?

Next Thursday is Thanksgiving. One of the great blessings for which you should thank God is recalled by Jonah's attitude toward his commission; it is what Charles Kingsley rightly says you should give thanks for every morning of your life, "that you have something to do that must be done, whether you like it or not."

"Go ye!" the Master said. That, first and last
Is heaven's commission unto all who come
Into the kingdom. Yonder beat of drum
Resounds, and "Forward!" calls the bugle blast.
James Buckham.

Our Prayer. O most merciful Father, we confess that we have done little to forward thy kingdom in the world, and to advance thy glory. We would humble ourselves before thee for our past neglects, and seek for thy forgiveness. Give us great zeal for thy glory. Make us more ready and more diligent by our prayers, by our alms, and by our examples, to spread abroad the knowledge of thy truths, and to enlarge the boundaries of thy kingdom. May the love of Christ constrain us, and may we do all to thy glory (*Bishop Walsham How*).

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Jonah, its character and teachings. See pp. 43–46 of our Introduction; also "The Growth of the Missionary Idea in the Old Testament," *Biblical World*, March and April, 1910.

2. Jonah the typical bigot of all ages.

3. The Sunday-school and the conquest of the world. See the report of the Zürich Convention of the World's Sunday-school Association, and "The Growing Importance of Foreign Missions," by Ex-president Taft, *Youth's Companion*, Jan. 1, 1914.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the Book of Amos through and make a note of all the evils he denounces. 2. What does the prophet say about himself in his first verse? 3. What proof of the luxurious living of the time is given in 3.15? What is meant by "the virgin of Israel"? (*Guide*, p. 450.) 5. What were Jesus' words of prophecy concerning Jerusalem? (Lk. 19.41.) 6. Look up Psalm 8.3 and 4, and tell what verses in our text naturally recall these words. 7. How are the poor still "trampled upon" in Canaan? (*Guide*, p. 452.) 8. What is the law in regard to the taking of a bribe? (Ex. 23.8.) 9. Is bribery common in the East today? (*Guide*, p. 452.)

Questions to Think About. 1. In poetry, what is a lamentation? 2. Why does the prophet declare Israel already fallen? (*Guide*, p. 450.) 3. What must the wealthy people of Israel, in the face of Israel's prosperity, have thought about Amos' declaration? (*Guide*, ¶ 5, p. 450.) 4. What is the meaning of verse 5? 5. Why is Israel called "The House of Joseph"? 6. What is meant by "turn justice to wormwood"? 7. Give the connection of thought between verses 7 and 8. (*Guide*, p. 451.) 8. What figure of speech is used in verse 8? (*Guide*, p. 451.) 9. What is meant by "take exactions from him of wheat"? (*Guide*, p. 451.) 10. What does verse 13 mean? (*Guide*, p. 451.) 11. How would you describe the spirit of Amos? 12. What sin denounced in our lesson is rampant in our land? 13. What other national sins would Amos denounce? 14. Why is Amos called a home missionary? 15. Have you any obligations in regard to the poor? 16. What is our class planning to do for the poor at Christmas? 17. It is almost time now to send Christmas cheer to the home missionaries and help on their work; what shall we do?

Note-Book Work. In your Book of Four Prophets, write the Story of Jonah.

Questions upon the Book of Amos. (Answers will be found in the Book itself and on pp. 37–40, of our Introduction.) In what century did Amos live and prophesy? Who was king in Judah? Who was king in Israel? Where was he born? What was his occupation? What was the character of the region where he pastured his flock? How is its effect shown in his writings? What was his character? How did his call to prophesy come to him? To which of the two kingdoms of Israel was he sent? What opposition did he meet? How did he meet it? How can his political knowledge be explained? How can his command of language be explained?

What is the date of the Book of Amos? How does the prophet himself date it? What is its date among the prophetical books? Among all the Books of the Bible?

What was the condition of Israel in Jeroboam Second's reign? How was it regarded among the nations? What signs of wealth were in evidence? What were the sins of the times? How does Amos denounce the luxury and false piety of the ruling classes? The perversion of justice and the oppression of the peasant classes? The dishonesty of shopkeepers? In what false security were the people resting?

What other nations does Amos denounce? In what order does he refer to them? In what way does he show remarkable grasp of the fact of God's universal rule? Quote his words. What four great facts stand out in his addresses to Israel? Quote 4.13. In what series of visions did he express Israel's approaching doom?

Describe Amos's style as a writer. From what is his imagery drawn? Quote the beautiful passage in which by a series of questions he shows the relation of cause and effect. What use does he make of orderly series of things? What lessons has the book for us today?

LESSON IX—NOVEMBER 28

AMOS, THE FEARLESS PROPHET
(Home Missionary Lesson)

Golden Text

He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. Jeremiah 23.28

LESSON Amos 5.1-15 MEMORIZE verses 14, 15

1 Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, O house of Israel. 2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise; she is cast down upon her land; there is none to raise her up. 3 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; The city that went forth a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went forth a hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel.

4. For thus saith Jehovah unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live; 5 but seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall come to nought. 6 Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, and there be none to quench it in Beth-el. 7 Ye who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth, 8 *seek him* that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name); 9 that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress.

10 They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. 11 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. 12 For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate *from their right.* 13 Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. 15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *A lamentation.* A term applied to poetry of a mournful tone, such as was sung over the dead, as in the case of David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, 2 S. 1.17, or in the face of any calamity, such as Ezekiel uttered in Ezekiel 19. Compare the Book of Lamentations. This lamentation in Amos "has the proper form of elegiac poetry in Hebrew, being composed of poetical verses in each of which a long line is followed by a short one."

2. *The virgin of Israel is fallen.* So sure is the prophet of her fall that it seems to be already accomplished. Israel is personified as a maiden sorely wounded. "'How is it possible,' said the people, 'that the virgin daughter of Israel can be fallen, when everybody is rich; or that the kingdom can be undermined, when the nation is prosperous? Is it not a nation's function to develop trade? Are not empires constructed for the purpose of increasing foreign commerce, and developing the home market? and now that trade with our great foreign markets and in our home market is at its height, this prophet comes and tells us that Israel has fallen, she can rise no more!' His countrymen judged by externals; he judged by principles. Amos saw and understood causes; the people recognized only results. Amos saw injustice and inequity practised and he reasoned thus: 'God is a God of justice. It is his will that justice should be done. Sooner or later God's will will be done, and our people must suffer.' Although he spoke many

decades before the destruction of Samaria, the consequences, which he saw, came to pass. The virgin of Israel did fall, and she has risen no more" (*Rabbi Levy*).

4. *For thus saith Jehovah.* There is a possibility of mercy, the impending doom may be averted.—*Seek ye me.* See God, verse 14.

5. *Seek not Bethel. . . . Gilgal . . . Beersheba.* God is not to be found at the shrines in those places with their corrupt worship.—*Pass not.* Cross not over the territory of the Kingdom of Judah.—*Bethel shall come to nought.* Or, *become vanity* (Hebrew *Aven*) RVm. "In the reference to Bethel there is a play on ideas: Bethel ('House of God') shall become Aven (House of 'Nothing'). Hosea actually calls it Beth Aven ('House of Nothing'), 4.15; 5.8; 10.5, and also Aven, 10.8."

6. *The House of Joseph.* Israel, the Northern Kingdom, is called the house of Joseph because Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, its most powerful tribes. *In Bethel.* The city which was the religious center here stands for the whole country, just as the house of Joseph stands for all the northern tribes.

7. *Turn justice to wormwood.* Practice injustice, bitter as wormwood. Lam. 3.19; and 6.12.

8–9. These verses depict the power of Jehovah. Sudden transition of thought is common in Amos, p. 40. Dr. H. S. Mitchell thus paraphrases, to show the connection between 7 and 8; "Ye oppressors, know ye not that Jehovah, whose mercy ye have spurned, is the Maker and Ruler of all things, a mightier then the mightiest? Therefore, ye enemies of righteousness, because ye trample, etc. (verses 10 and 11)." Compare Amos 4.13.—*The Pleiades and Orion.* By the figure of speech called synecdoche, these two constellations stand for all the hosts of heaven; the verse naturally recalls Psalm 8.3 and 4.

> When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
> The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
> What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

—*The shadow of death.* Or, *deep darkness*, RVm: as in the Shepherd Psalm.—*And poureth them out upon the face of the earth.* Is there a reference here to the Deluge? "If so," observes Dr. Mitchell, "the three illustrations of the power of Jehovah form a series, and this last suggests the application of the thought that immediately follows; Jehovah by whom the world was made, of whose will the order and harmony in nature are an expression, and at whose command the forces in nature may become as destructive as they have been beneficent."

9. *Bringeth sudden destruction.* Or, *causeth destruction to flash forth*, RVm.—*The fortress.* The palaces: Amos 3.11.

10. *They.* Ye, of verse 7.—*In the gate.* In the broad, open space before the city gate where claims were adjusted.—*That speaketh uprightly.* Whose decisions are just.

11. *Take exactions from him of wheat.* This is the specific way in which they "trampled" upon the poor. "*They* are the judges who are being addressed; the poor man had to buy justice from them by giving them a share of his scanty wheat "He who robs his brother, if he were clever enough would rob God" (*Watkinson*). —*Houses of hewn stone.* A proof of their wealth: compare Isa. 9.10.—*Ye shall not dwell in them. . . Ye shall not drink the wine thereof.* This is the conclusion of "Forasmuch therefore." Compare Lamartine's observation that man never fastened one end of a chain around the neck of his brother, that God did not fasten the other around the neck of the oppressor.

12. *A bribe. . . the needy.* The bribe was accepted from the rich and the latter was allowed to escape the penalty due him; from the needy, who could not pay a bribe, his rights were withheld.

13. *Therefore.* The evil justices were in power, it was useless for others, so they think, to attempt to change things, they would only get themselves into trouble in such a time as has just been described. In the words of the One Volume Commentary: What is the use of talking? As a modern writer says:

> "For what avail'd it, all the noise
> And outcry of the farmer men?"

An observation of Dr. Shailer Matthews is pertinent here: "Civilization," he says, "is conquering the world, but will the gospel conquer civilization?"

14. *Seek good.* Compare Micah 6.8.—*Jehovah, the God of hosts.* The mighty, powerful God, verses 8–9.—*Will be with you; as ye say.* Will be with you in reality, as now you vainly assert that he is with you. They were vainly imagining that Jehovah was with them because they were enjoying material prosperity, as Amos' words elsewhere show.

15. *The remnant of Joseph.* The small proportion of the children of Israel who will escape. Recall how often Isaiah mentions this remnant.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *Ye trample upon the poor.* The rich still trample upon the poor in the land of Canaan today. The legal rate of interest on money loaned is nine per cent, but a resident of the land says that it is by no means unknown for the rich to charge as much as thirty, and it is possible to manipulate matters and make the rate of interest a hundred per cent, Amos 3. 10. Even a priest discriminates against the poor and refuses to pray for anybody without pay.

12. *Ye that take a bribe.* The law read: Thou shalt take no bribe, for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous, Ex. 23.8. The word translated *bribe* means primarily a present, such presents as have always been taken in oriental lands to a superior. Professor McCurdy tells us that in the correspondence of the El Amarna tablets the business is seen to be quite overdone, while the annals of the Assyrian kings fairly swarm with instances. It was, therefore, a natural thing to send a present to a judge before a case came up for hearing; though publicity was not desirable (Prov. 21.14) and was usually avoided, as a suggestive proverb informs us, Prov. 17.23. And he remarks about the present custom that to a casual observer of oriental life the prevailing official corruption is something appalling.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What sons of a judge took bribes? (1 S. 8.) What prophets have we heard about in this year's lessons? Who was the greatest? Which of them were the heroes of Bible Books? Were any of them writers of a Bible Book? What meaning has " the shadow of death " in the Twenty-third Psalm?

Amos, the Prophet and the Book. Today's lesson cannot be understood without a knowledge of the life and character of the prophet Amos, in as far as we can see it through his writing, of the times in which he lived, and of his message as a whole. Read the Book of Amos through, once to get its scope, and then give it a second careful reading to get its message. Study what is said about it on pp. 37–40 of our Introduction.

" I am no prophet nor a prophet's son, but I am an herdman," Amos tells us. The earlier prophets in Israel—Samuel and Elijah and Elisha—were the king's advisers, theirs was a kind of official position. The so-called sons of the prophets were professional men, as it were, earning their living by prophesying. But Amos earned his living caring for his flocks. It was at the Divine call that he thundered forth his warnings to a corrupt people.

Can you not see him keeping his lonely watch over the goats, and when they were not inclined to wander sitting by himself and meditating, gazing off toward Jerusalem whose white towers he could dimly descry on the horizon, gazing up at the brilliant stars and thinking that even like them in multitude so had been the loving kindnesses of God to his chosen people? Yet the people had wandered far from God. Then his thoughts would turn to Assyria, that great nation which was sending forth its armies and conquering nation after nation—Israel lay in her pathway, hers was the avenging hand by which God would punish his erring people.

Chapter four ends with a vision of Jehovah coming to avenge himself upon his guilty people: Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth —Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name. Then our lesson begins with a lament over Israel, and concludes with an exhortation, in which the prophet shows there is yet a possibility of obtaining mercy and entreats Israel to seek Jehovah.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Amos, the prophet, was a native of Tekoa, in the mountainous region six miles south of Bethlehem. His addresses were delivered to the people of the Northern Kingdom, especially at Bethel. For Bethel see p. 329; for Gilgal, p. 129. Beer-sheba was thirty miles south-west of Hebron, on the road to Egypt. It was here that Abraham dug a well, and here he built an altar to Jehovah which was later restored by Isaac and again by Jacob.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

In our Golden Text lies the message for you. Amos was a fearless, faithful proclaimer of God's word. The same qualities are needed, combined with the tact which Amos also possessed, in a teacher of today. The Bible is an out-spoken Book. To bring home its message—the word of God—with no uncertain voice, to a careless, thoughtless, if not sinning group, is the task which you have in common with Amos. "The Lord hath spoken," said Amos, "who can but prophesy?" This "who can but" is characteristic of Amos's messages. He went to Israel, not because he wanted to go but because God sent him; he spoke for God, not because it pleased him to hurl forth his warnings, but because he must, because he felt the sense of a Divine urgency upon him.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

When King David was a lad where was his home? Where did he spend most of his time? Was it hard work, tending sheep? What did he learn to do with a sling? How did he later use his sling against a foe? What else did he do while he was caring for the sheep? A shepherd had time to do many things. Many years after David's time there was a shepherd in that same part of the country; his home was in the little village of Tekoa, outh of the fields of Beth ehem where David had watched his flock. His name was Amos. Show Wilde's picture No. 243, The Shepherd and his Dog, or Tissot's picture of Amos, No. 110. We do not hear of his slinging stones or singing to a harp as did David, but we know that he had time to think, to think about his country and what would be its fate if the people kept on living a they did, kept on forgetting God.

"Sometimes," says Dean Hodges in "The Castle of Zion," "a caravan came by; such as stopped in the old time on its way from Midian o Egyp , and carried off Joseph. The men of these caravans were traders, who brought the spices of the East to sell in the markets of the South. The road lay beside the fields of Amos, and when they stopped to give their camels drink from the well at which he watered the sheep, he talked with them. They told him what was going on in Damascus and in Tyre; they described what they had seen in Israel and in Judah; they brought him the gossip of the nations. After they were gone he thought about these things for days.

"Sometimes he took the wool of his sheep, and went into cities to sell it. And he looked about him, noticing what buildings were there, and how the people dressed and behaved themselves. He observed the rich and the poor. He visited the courts of law, and listened to the judges. He attended services in churches, and watched the priests. Then he came home to his sheep, and thought about what he had seen and heard. He hated the rich merchants, who lived in splendid houses of hewn stone, and lay upon soft cushions on beds of ivory, and were entertained by skilful players on instruments of music, and drank wine out of bowls, selling goods out of measures which were too small and in scales whose weights were too light, making men work long hours for little pay, charging high prices, afflicting the souls of the poor. He hated the priests, who busied themselves with beautiful services, and let this wickedness go on without a protest.

"As Amos thought upon these things, he said to himself, God cannot bless any nation which disobeys his laws. Wickedness shall certainly be punished. These great cities shall certainly be destroyed unless they repent, and change their ways.

"It seemed to Amos very dreadful that people should be going on toward such a fate with nobody doing anything to prevent it. He felt like one who sees a boat drifting down a river, and knows that beyond are rapids and then a steep fall, and that the people are bound to be drowned unless they turn about and row up stream or to the shore. At last, he heard the voice of God in his soul telling him to cry aloud and give a warning."

Tell how Amos went to the people of Israel and spoke the word of God faithfully. Do not attempt to teach the words of our lesson text. One of the sins for which he rebuked the people was the way they treated the poor. Repeat the poem on p. 457, and bring its thought home to your pupils.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Last week we heard how Jonah warned the Ninevites of approaching doom. How did they take the warning? What was the result? Today another prophet warns his own people of their sins and the doom that awaits them, and whether or not the Israelites repent and are pardoned our succeeding lessons tell. Who was the prophet? What kingdom was he warning?

For Older Pupils. Jonah was sent to Nineveh and Jonah shirked the task. It seemed a very hard task, the one that was laid upon Jonah, but events proved that it was not so hard to reach the heart and conscience of those Gentiles. Earlier, another Hebrew prophet was given a mission—a man of Judah was sent to the court of Israel, and this home mission work laid upon Amos by God may seem to us an easier task. But it proved far harder. The heart and conscience of the kindred people were not touched.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Home Missions

Amos the Home Missionary. The Book of Amos is called the work of a home missionary, because Amos was sent from Judah to call his kinsmen of Israel back to God. Amos had an intense love of God and love of country, the two noblest passions in a human heart, Dr. Henry van Dyke calls them, and these two unite in Home Missions.

The Beginning of our Home Missionary Movement. Soon after the Revolution the home missionary movement began, which has been such a blessing to our country. It may be regarded as the lineal descendant of its colonial progenitor, and the deep indebtedness of our country to its unfaltering zeal and its untiring labor is now a part of our religious history. The names of its promoters and servants, especially such men as Manasseh Cutler, who is forever identified with the history of the great Northwest Territory, and also Marcus Whitman, whose later services in the far Northwest were of such conspicuous value, are, with many others, high on the roll of public benefactors.

Manasseh Cutler was the able and indefatigable agent of the Ohio Company, to whose personal influence and advocacy more than of any other man was due the insertion in the famous Ordinance of 1787 of those noble clauses concerning religion, education, and the prohibition of slavery, afterward incorporated in the constitution of the State of Ohio. He may not have been personally the originator, but he was the ardent supporter in that hour of its official adoption of the provision for the realization of statehood which settled in that formative period of our history the political destiny of the territorial organization in our form of government. Cutler is thus a shining example of the way in which Providence often uses the man of God, who, in many almost unnoted instances, is also the missionary, as the servant of the State, for the establishment of political and social principles of far-reaching import. Among missionaries identified with the early history of our country who have received votes for a place in the "Hall of Fame," not sufficient, however, to secure an election, are Whitman, Brainerd, Titus Coan, Manasseh Cutler, and Samuel Kirkland. An American, of all men, who depreciates the value of either foreign or home missions comes very near despising one of the original sponsors of his national birthright. *Dr. James S. Dennis*, in *The Call of Modern Missions.*

The Home Mission Call. The Highlanders of the South, of sturdy Scotch-Irish descent, hidden away among their mountain ranges, were left unnoted for years, until a prominent American writer began to locate her stories among their homes, and scenery-loving tourists discovered their ignorance and poverty. The Home Mission teacher soon saw their worth of character and keen intellects, if only opportunity for education were afforded, and saw, too, in spite of surface evil, an inbred receptivity for spiritual truth. The young men and women, hungry for an education, proved of sturdy stuff, willing to endure hardships and to put forth every possible effort of their own to gain the coveted opportunity. Gen-

erous and worthy results have followed the work done in these schools tucked away in mountain and valley.

Following the trail of need and opportunity the Home Mission woman looked from the south land to the far distant north, and her vision rested on the fur-clad Alaskan in his snowy home. At a distance he might be a picturesque object: but at close range grease and filth and seeming stolidity rendered him extremely unattractive. But the heart of woman has always yearned over the needy; and a woman said, "There is a soul under this repulsive exterior. Let us find it and win it for Christ."

The American trader had carried into the land liquor and vice and crime, teaching the Alaskan only evil. The American Home Mission woman carried in the schoolhouse, the hospital, the gospel of cleanliness, purity, knowledge, sobriety, honesty, salvation. The Alaskan was wise enough to understand which brought the better gift, and to respond to the endeavor for his betterment and education. Slowly, it is true; but the kingdom of heaven has never moved forward anywhere with rapidity. The real making of a nation, of a community, of a soul, takes time. God makes haste slowly; but his work never needs to be undone.

Meanwhile, and with ever increasing volume, flowed into this land of liberty and promise the tide of those who came because of their poverty, their oppression, their ignorance; those to whom, in some vague and undefined way, America stood for the land of milk and honey for every one. Some have called them a problem: but are not problems given us to be solved? So, instead of a menace, the Home Mission women began to think of them as a national asset of great and undeveloped value, brought here under the guiding Providence of our God that we might make come true for them and for their children the promise of knowledge and prosperity; only it must be of that divine kind which deals in values, not of dollars and cents, but of character and growth and service.

Is there any limit to the extent and variety of ministration which may be comprehended within the scope of Home Missions? We now number over one hundred millions of people. We are told our country can easily provide a comfortable home for two hundred and fifty millions. Looked at from the standpoint of human strength and ability, it presents almost a heart-breaking aspect; so much of sin, so much of suffering, greed, selfishness, oppression, all apparently increasing at a tremendous rate. Can humanity ever overtake the need, and begin to diminish it? No, and Christian humanity does not expect to. But God can: and his servants see in all this struggling, suffering, sinning mass of their fellows a great company of those to whom they can minister in his name and by his power with the certainty that in due time the problem shall be solved. *Mrs. D. B. Wells*, in *Conservation of National Ideals.*

The First Task. Up in her own room, Hope thought it all over for the thousandth time. It seemed terrible to spend all your life in commonplace ways, sewing, and going to parties, and designing decorations, and trying to keep children quiet, when out there beyond the hedge and the quiet shaded street was a whole world of real things—suffering, and tragedy, and terrible want.

"I can't stand it," Hope cried fiercely, "I can't! Nobody cares, but I can't stand it!" She picked up her hat and her coat from the bed, and put them on hurriedly. She would go to Dr. Stanton; he would understand. Had he not often told her, since she came back from college, how much she helped him down at the parish house? Fifteen minutes later, in the quiet study, the girl poured it all out—her longings, the indifference of the home people to the call that summoned her—the fact that they did not need her, and that the world did.

"Are you quite sure of that, child?" the rector asked gravely. "Sure of what?" Hope asked startled. "That the home people don't need you?" "Oh, I know it!" the girl cried passionately. "We seem almost to live in different worlds—we have for years!"

The rector leaned forward, and laid his kind hand upon the girl's. "Hope," he said, "don't you see? You say they do not need you at home—that there is no real sympathy between your heart and theirs. Yet you want to go and help people with whom you will have infinitely less in common. You have not made your home people want you, yet you think you have something to give others. Don't you see that until you have won the confidence of those whom God gave you first of all, you have no right to ask for a new field? We may make mistakes in our vocations, but we cannot possibly make mistakes in our families, because God has taken that out of our hands."

For a long time Hope sat silent. Then she rose. "I am going to try again," she said. *Condensed* from the *Youth's Companion.*

II Seek Ye Me and Ye Shall Live

Our Nation's Need of God. This ample, splendid, fruitful, energetic, prosperous America of ours is not, perhaps, conscious enough of all its needs. It has many of them, but none is greater or more pressing than its need of God.

This is not an arraignment of our morals. For all our outcry against political and financial corruption, we are, as the world goes, a moral people. We are a generous people, a kindly people, a sympathetic people, ready to respond abundantly to the appeal of any form of want or suffering.

But this habitual kindness and conventional morality, on which we pride ourselves too much, covers but cannot hide the deeper need of which *The Companion* wishes to speak. Look back at the past, at the history of all the nations of the world; how many peoples do you find who show in their common daily lives as little sense as we show today of what you may call, if you will, "the not-ourselves," "the spiritual mystery," "the Divine"? There is no better name to call it by than "God."

We have churches, you protest. So we have. But there are some who do not go to them, and not all of those who do go listen. And what is far more important, in most cases God is left in the church. Who names his Name in the rush of business or in the tumult of pleasure? How many of us—writer, lawyer, doctor, broker, politician, or clubwoman—connect the thought of him with any absorbing interest of our lives?

There are various reasons for this. One is the real decay of belief, due to the subtle infusion of science, or misunderstood science, into all our thoughts. And there are others. But the most curious of all is an excess of reverence. From the time of the original Protestant revulsion against the undue familiarity of the middle ages with the saints and things Divine, there has been a growing tendency to remove God further and further from common daylight and common dust and toil and common tears and laughter into the shadow of shrines and the dim odor of sanctuaries, until we have taken him from all contact with our real lives, where everything must dwell that is to touch us with any vital power.

The process has gone on so quietly that we have not been conscious of it, has gone on so far that we have lost all appreciation of its significance; yet it offers one of the greatest problems that the twentieth century has to deal with, greater far than any political or economic problem. A nation can get on without kings, without navies, without air-ships, telephones, but no nation has ever long grown and flourished and triumphed without God. *Youth's Companion.*

III Our Treatment of the Poor

A Faint Echo of Amos. An English newspaper quotes the "Toronto Globe" concerning the condition of some parts of the great Far West, which owing to Eastern monopolies are "fattening on the necessities of the people." With coal priced at fourteen dollars per half-ton, and "a shameful hold-up in the prices of lumber necessary to house live-stock," together with "speculative traffic in real estate," the people are crying out against the unscrupulous "Big Interests" which "are making life a burden, and the slum inevitable." And then the English paper adds: "We are accustomed to think of Western Canada, as a farmer's Utopia; and so it might be, but for the greed of those who exploit their fellow-men for their own profit."

Trampling on the Poor. "Five dollars! Gertrude, I never heard of such a thing! Any dressmaker I know would have charged twenty, at least."

"That's what I told you. Isn't she a find? It isn't just the work, you know —she has ideas. Look at those sleeves—aren't they the daintest things you ever saw? Of course she is overrun with work, but if you tell her that you are a friend of mine she'll find time for you somehow."

"I surely will try," Frances Mallory replied, absently. She was still studying the lovely chiffon gown on the bed. She knew exactly the amount of work in all the dainty trimming. "I couldn't afford twenty," she said, slowly, "and I should tell her so frankly, but I could pay ten."

"But, Frances, you never would! You *couldn't!*" exclaimed Gertrude. "Don't you see it's a point of honor? I would like to pay her more, of course, but if I did she would raise her prices, and the girls who told me about her would all be

down on me—and they'd have a right to be. She must be getting along all right, or she'd ask more herself. She's getting lots more to do than she had in the country—"

"So she came from the country—that explains it. I'm afraid I'll have to keep on with Miss Bridges, dear. Don't think me ungrateful. This woman does much prettier work, and I'd love to have her, but I couldn't take advantage of her ignorance; I should feel like a robber every time I wore the gown. You see I know the work in it—you don't."

"I know that you are an absolute fanatic about some things, Frances Mallory!" Gertrude cried, hotly. "You'd better go! I'm cross!"

Frances went at once. Gertrude's "crossness" did not trouble her—it would evaporate in an hour; but the problem did. Was she foolish? Had she a right to profit by another's ignorance? Was it possible, after all, that the little dressmaker "got along all right"?

The little dressmaker herself, at that moment, sat in a room heaped with work, and wearily pushed her hair back from her hot forehead. "You ought to stop, Lucy," her mother said, anxiously. Lucy shook her head. She knew to a penny the amount of the week's bills, and the number of hours of work it took to meet them. "You ought to ask more," her mother fretted, "such work as you do—" Lucy looked up, terror in her tired eyes. "O mother—suppose they should leave me? I'd never dare!"

If Gertrude could have heard, would it have made any difference? *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

The Difference.

Some children roam the fields and hills,
And others work in noisy mills;
Some dress in silks, and dance and play,
While others drudge their lives away;
Some glow with health and bound with song,
And some must suffer all day long.

Which is your lot, my girl and boy?
Is it a life of ease and joy?
Ah, if it is, its glowing sun
The poorer life should shine upon.—
Make glad one little heart today,
And help one burdened child to play.

Mary Mapes Dodge.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Amos. Pages 37–40 of our Introduction.
2. Social justice. See "The Progressive Movement," *Outlook*, Sept. 14, 1912.
3. The Missionary situation at home. See "Industrial Service," *Youth's Companion*, Dec. 25, 1913.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read the parallel account in 2 K. 15. 1–7. 2. How old was Uzziah when he began to reign? (2 Ch. 26.3.) 3. How long did he reign? (2 Ch. 26.3.) 4. Who was his father? (2 Ch. 26.1.) 5. His grandfather? (2 Ch. 24.27.) 6. What can you learn about the Philistine cities mentioned in v. 6? (*Guide*, p. 460.) 7. About Uzziah's pasture lands? (*Guide*, p. 459.) 8. Where on the wall were the towers built and for what purpose? (*Guide*, p. 460.) 9. What weapons did the engines hurl? (*Guide*, p. 459.) 10. What was the law in regard to burning of incense? (Num. 18.7.) 11. What was the law in regard to the abode of a leper? (Lev. 13.46.) 12. What two other Bible characters were punished by leprosy for their sins? (Num. 12.10; 2 K. 5.27.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of "he was marvellously helped"? 2. What sort of towers were built in the wilderness and for what purpose? 3. What is the meaning of "he loved husbandry"? 4. What is the meaning of "his heart was lifted up"? 5. Instead of saying, "neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God," how would we express the same thought? 6. What does "it pertaineth not unto thee" mean? 7. What does our Golden Text mean? 8. What did Jesus say about pride?

Note-Book Work. In your Book of Four Prophets, write The Story of Amos.

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LESSON X—DECEMBER 5

UZZIAH'S PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT

Golden Text

A man's pride shall bring him low;
But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor. Proverbs 29.23

LESSON II Chronicles 26; verses 8-10, 15-21 printed MEMORIZE verse 16

8 And the Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong. 9 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall,* and fortified them. 10 And he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle; in the lowland also, and in the plain: *and he had* husbandmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields; for he loved husbandry.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men. 18 and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah beside the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *The Ammonites.* See p. 145.—*Gave tribute to Uzziah.* He had conquered the Philistines and Arabians and Meunim (verses 6–7), and the Ammonites evidently saw there was no use in trying to fight so powerful a king.—*Uzziah.* He is usually called Azariah in Kings.—*Even to the entrance of Egypt.* "Isaiah says, 'Judah is filled from the East, she strikes hands with the sons of strangers,' and mentions ships of Tarshish and caravans. Whether Uzziah throughout his long reign remained under that subjection to Northern Israel which was confirmed by Amaziah's defeat at Beth-Shemesh, or gradually advanced to more equal relations with Jeroboam II, it is difficult to say. In either case the two kingdoms were at peace, and between them commanded the trade from Elath to the borders of Phœnicia and Damascus. So great a commerce was in the hands mainly of foreigners—Arabs, according to Isaiah,

A Subject People Paying Tribute.

and doubtless also Arameans. They must have brought unto Judah many foreign products and inventions; also a familiarity with life and institutions in Assyria and Egypt" (*George Adam Smith*).

9. *Built towers in Jerusalem. . . turning of the wall.* At three weak places in the city wall Uzziah erected towers of defense. For their location see p. 460.

10. *Towers in the wilderness.* The wilderness was the wild pasture land south and southeast of Judah. The towers were watchtowers, built for the protection of the shepherds and herdsmen against the marauding Arabs.—*Hewed out.* Cut out of the rock.—*Cisterns.* Cisterns for storing water have always been a necessity in Palestine.—*Lowland.* The Shephelah, the stretch of low hills between the Maritime Plain and the central range.—*The plain.* Or, *tableland,* RVm. This table land was east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley.—*The fruitful fields.* Or, *Carmel;* See 1 S. 25.2, RVm.—*He loved husbandry.* He was greatly interested in farming.

11–14. An account of Uzziah's detachments of men for swift forays, and of his army and armament.

15. *Engines to be on the towers.* This is the first mention of such engines. They were known earlier to the Assyrians: see p. 461.—*Battlements.* Or, *corner towers,* RVm.—*Wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones.* Such engines for hurling stones were afterwards called by the Romans *balistæ*; they could discharge stones weighing as much as three hundred pounds. Those that discharged arrows—to a distance even of a quarter of a mile—were called by the Romans *catapultæ.*—*He was marvellously helped.* Jehovah helped him, verse 7.—*Till he was strong.* Prosperous, powerful among the nations.

16. *His heart was lifted up.* With pride.—*So that he did corruptly.* Or, *to his destruction,* RVm.—*He trespassed against Jehovah.* He dealt presumptuously with holy things.—*For he went into the temple to burn incense upon the altar of incense.* The altar of incense stood in the Holy Place, separated only by the veil from the Holy of Holies, and it was lawful only for the priests to enter there, Num. 18.7. Recall the lesson taught by the history of Korah, Num. 16.

17. *Azariah the priest.* The high priest, verse 20.—*Valiant men.* Powerful men.

18. *Withstood.* Opposed.—*It pertaineth not unto thee.* It does not belong to you by right, it is not proper for you.—*The priests the sons of Aaron.* See Ex. 30. 7, 8.—*Neither shall it be for thine honor.* It shall be for thy dishonor.

19. *Then Uzziah was wroth.* "Uzziah's wrath was perfectly natural; few men have been so uniformly patient of reproof as not sometimes to have turned in anger upon those who warned them against sin. The most dramatic feature of this episode, the sudden frost of leprosy in the king's forehead, is not without its spiritual antitype. Men's anger at well-merited reproof has often blighted their lives once for all with ineradicable moral leprosy. In the madness of passion they have broken bonds which have hitherto restrained them and committed themselves beyond recall to evil pursuits" (*Bennett*).—*The leprosy broke forth in his forehead.* Hebrew, *rose,* RVm. Thus Miriam was punished, Num. 12.10, and Gehazi, 2 K. 5.27.

20–21. *They thrust him out quickly.* For he was now "unclean."—*Dwelt in a separate house.* According to the law, Lev. 13.46.—*Jotham his son was over the king's house.* Jotham occupied the royal palace and governed as regent.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

10. *He hewed out many cisterns.* Cisterns abound throughout Palestine. They are not confined to the cities and villages, where they are often built of solid masonry, but are often seen in the most solitary part of the wilderness. These latter consist of a large tank more or less deep in the earth, built around with stonework, the walls rising several feet above the ground and sometimes roofed. A door in one side of the structure leads down a flight of steps extending even to the bottom of the tank, so that by it the water is always accessible, however high or low it may be in the cistern. *Van Lennep,* in *Bible Lands.*

14. *Stones for slinging.* The sling was used in warfare by the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. Recall lesson IV of Second Quarter. The people most renowned for its use were the natives of the Balearic Islands, who considered the sling of so much importance that the principal care of a parent was to instruct a boy in its use, and he was not permitted to have his breakfast until he had dislodged a stone from a beam with the sling.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How did Goliath's pride in his prowess lead to his downfall? How did Saul's stubborn wilfulness meet punishment? How have we seen the Israelites come into conflict with the Ammonites and with what result? In what two earlier lessons have we heard about slings and stones being used? What king of Judah came to the throne when only seven years of age? Was he a good or a bad king? Who was the man who saved him from death and made him king and kept him in the right path? After that man's death, how did the king rule?

Three Reigns in Judah. Today we turn again to the Kingdom of Judah. Joash was the last king about whom we have studied. Joash, you remember, did right as long as the high priest Jehoiada lived to counsel him, but upon the latter's death Joash with his people departed from the worship of Jehovah. When Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, rebuked the king, he was stoned to death. The Syrians conquered Joash's army, disease came upon him, and his own servants put an end to his life after a reign of forty years. He was succeeded by his son Amaziah, who conquered the Edomites, but brought back their idols and worshipped them. Joash, king of Israel, defeated him, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and despoiled the temple of its treasures. A conspiracy was raised against him in his own army and he was assassinated. Then his son Uzziah, a lad of sixteen, became king. Uzziah reigned fifty-two years, and forty of these years were contemporaneous with the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel, 780–740 B. C.

Uzziah's Reign. Amaziah had conquered the Edomite foes on the south, and Uzziah's first battle was fought with the Philistine foe on the west. Under Uzziah Judah, as Israel under Jeroboam II, attained its greatest height of seeming prosperity. Uzziah's wars with the Philistines, the Arabians, the Meunim and the Ammonites were successful. He built and fortified three towers on the walls of Jerusalem. He also built towers of defense in the wilderness and hewed out cisterns for his cattle; his great herds were pastured among the low hills on the west, in the wilderness on the south, and on the table land east of the Jordan. His vineyards and fields yielded abundance. He had a great army, thoroughly equipped with armor and weapons, and on the towers and battlements of Jerusalem he had great engines for shooting stones and arrows. He was marvelously helped. But prosperity proved his undoing—how, is the subject of our lesson.

We carry no farther the fortunes of the Southern Kingdom, for our succeeding lessons deal with the Northern Kingdom, and with its fall our course ends. Hezekiah was on the throne of Judah when Samaria fell; one hundred and thirty-six years later, in 586 B. C., Jerusalem fell and the end of the southern Kingdom came.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Three cities of Philistia are mentioned in verse 6, as having had their walls broken down by Uzziah. *Gath* was probably on the border of Judah near Ekron; it was utterly destroyed by Assyria shortly before Amos wrote in 750 B. C. *Jabneh*, west of Ekron, had a harbor at the mouth of a river. *Ashdod*, the halfway station between Gaza and Joppa, on the great Egyptian road, was the strongest of all the Philistine cities.

Gur-baal, where the Arabians dwelt, v. 7, must have been in the wilderness south-east of Judah. *Gur* may have meant *Gerar*. The *Meunim* were the native people who dwelt in the Mt. Seir region, by the Dead Sea. The *Ammonites* belonged on the tableland east of the Jordan Valley. In the desert region south and east of Judah Uzziah built his towers as a defense against the maurauding Arabs.

Uzziah added to the fortifications of Jerusalem by building and fortifying towers at *the corner gate*, probably in the northeast, at the *valley gate*, on the south, leading into the Valley of Hinnom, and at the *turning of the wall*, perhaps the south-east corner of the temple area. Dr. George Adam Smith prefers the plural of the Septuagint, turnings of the wall, and says Uzziah built "gate towers and flanking towers at angles where the walls turned round the city or bent with the natural line of rock. Probably this was all that was required on the walls of Jerusalem, which for the most part were planted on the edge of deep ravines high above the reach of breaching engines. Uzziah's flanking towers fully served their purpose. Where before his reign the comparatively small forces of Northern Israel had made

a long breach on the northern wall, the only breachable part of the defences, after his reign the engines of Assyria herself failed to effect an entrance."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Begin by telling your pupils Longfellow's Sicilian Tale. Tell it more simply and more graphically than I have told it below. Then tell them how Uzziah was humbled. Do not dwell on the details of the proofs of his prosperity, but emphasize the thought that God prospered him and then he grew proud and failed to obey God's commands. The fable of the kite, p. 463, and then the story about Dr. Milne, p. 464, may be followed by questions about the things that might make your pupils proud, and a talk about the fact that possessions are no cause for pride, they are all God's good gifts, just as Uzziah's prosperity came from God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. King Robert of Sicily once heard the priests at church chanting:

> He has put down the mighty from their seat
> And has exalted them of low degree,

and he muttered scornfully,

> 'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
> Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
> For unto priests and people be it known,
> There is no power can push me from my throne!

Lulled by the monotonous chant, the impious king fell asleep. When he awoke it was night, and he was in the church alone. He cried and knocked till the sexton came and flung open the door. Clothed in rags, Robert of Sicily sprang out and rushed to the palace.

> There on the dais sat another king,
> Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
> King Robert's self in features, form and height,
> But all transfigured with angelic light!

"Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?" the Angel King inquired. "I am the king, and I come to claim my own from an imposter who usurps my throne," proudly cried Robert. "Nay, not the king, but the king's jester," said the Angel, and Robert was obliged to wear the cap and bells and take his place in the retinue of the king, by courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn. Oft the new king would meet him and ask, "Art thou the king?" and he would fling the haughty answer back, "I am, I am the king."

Three years passed, and a change came over proud Robert. On Easter Sunday

> He felt within a power unfelt before,
> And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
> He heard the rushing garments of the Lord,
> Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward,

and when once more the Angel King repeated his question, "Art thou the king?" King Robert meekly answered:

> Thou knowest best!
> My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
> And in some cloister's school of penitence,
> Across those stones that pave the way to heaven,
> Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!

The proud king was humbled. Through the open window they heard the monks chanting:

> He has put down the mighty from their seat,
> And has exalted them of low degree!

The Angel smiled. "I am an Angel, and thou art the king!" he said, and vanished. When the courtiers came they found king Robert kneeling upon the floor near the throne, absorbed in silent prayer.

You will recognize in our story the Sicilian's Tale in Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. It is only a legend, of course. Uzziah, King of Judah, like Robert of Sicily, thought that no power could push him from his throne, and like Robert he was humbled.

(If you have assigned this poem, let some member of your class tell it.)

For Older Pupils. Which is harder to bear nobly, prosperity or adversity? What are some of the temptations of the prosperous? What are some of the temptations of the unprosperous? What is the difference in the kind of temptations which the two have to fight against? Was Carlyle right when he said that for one who can stand prosperity one hundred can stand adversity? Let us see how Uzziah stood his prosperity, and then return to these questions.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Bearing Prosperity

How Haman Bore Prosperity. Haman, the captive Amalekite, in some way won the favor of King Ahasueras. He was an astute man, and he succeeded in gaining greater and greater power over the king until he made himself the power behind the throne. He could not bear prosperity, however, any better than did Uzziah. His head was turned by success, his heart was so lifted up that he believed every one should bow down and do him reverence, as did all the king's servants. But one day Mordecai, a Jew, refused thus humbly to salute him; and in great wrath Haman planned the death of all the Jews in the kingdom. In this he overreached himself, and it came about that he was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. His story recalls Cowper's lines:

> Beware of too sublime a sense
> Of your own worth and consequence.
> The man who deems himself so great,
> And his importance of such weight,
> That all around in all that's done
> Must move and act for him alone,
> Will learn, in school of tribulation,
> The folly of his expectation.

A Peril. Scientists teach that it was an advantage to certain animals to increase in bulk up to a certain point, but, having reached that point, the increase of size became the cause of their extinction. The glorious train of the peacock was at first an advantage, but as its plumes increase in number and size they become dangerous to the bird, it flies with difficulty. The expansion of the wings in butterflies of certain families seems to have reached a maximum, any further development threatens the existence of the species.

Whatever truth there may be about the danger to animals through development in size, it is very clear that increase in power, riches, or popularity is fraught with temptation to poor human nature. The peacock train soon makes it difficult to rise from the ground, the expanding butterfly wings prove a peril. Let me beware. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson*, in *The Gates of Dawn.*

The Dark Valley of Prosperity. The great test of individual character is not struggle, but attainment; not failure, but success; not adversity, but prosperity. When nature wants to put a man through the third degree, she places near him his laurel wreaths of victory: she megaphones to him the world's plaudits of success, she parades stacks of newspaper clippings and magazine articles with his portraits; she clinks his money-bags in his ears, and she tells him confidentially of the world-changing power of his influence. She smiles on him kindly and murmurs, "Poor fellow, is he able to stand it?" Then she sends him for his test through the dark valley of prosperity.

It is called the dark valley of prosperity because it so often dims the vision of the finer realities of life. In the early stages, in the dimness, they can not see their old friends as they pass. There comes a peculiarity of the extensor muscles which prevents their extending the hand to some one no longer necessary to them. They acquire a form of memory impairment which prevents their remembering past favors and debts of gratitude due to those who stood by them in their hours of need.

In the dark valley, their dearest hopes and their high ideals often slip away into the silence. For them are substituted avarice and ambition, dressed in a livery of gold, and one may near-sightedly mistake them for higher good.

Poverty, struggle, failure and adversity are not in themselves passports to saintship—though they have given moral strength and sweetness to thousands. They have their own hard, bitter temptations to meet face to face. Theirs is far from an easy fight—the daily hand-to-hand battle with fate. But their temptations are usually direct, bold, clearly defined, and their joys require so little. The tempting tests of prosperity come in subtle phases, gilded, perfumed, masked in deceptive guise.

If called upon to bear the burdens of the greater responsibility let us bear them bravely at our best and let nothing rob us of simplicity, sweetness, strength, sympathy and all that is sterling. The greatest men and women are ever the simplest. *Condensed* from *The Crown of Individuality*, by *Wm. George Jordan.*

Prosperity Nobly Borne. From the humblest circumstances Abraham Lincoln was exalted to the hi hest position in the gift of the nation. Prosperity did not spoil him in the least, he bore it nobly. In a speech at New Haven the President said: I am not ashamed to confess that twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer, hauling rails, at work on a flat-boat—just what might happen to any poor man's son.

Gipsy Smith is one of the most successful evangelists of the day; crowds throng the halls wherever he speaks. On his study table in his home he keeps an old knife that his father used as a roving gipsy, and this knife, he claims, keeps down his pride. "When I return from a great campaign," he says, "I pick up the old knife, and I say to myself, 'If it were not for the grace of God, I would still be using this as a wandering gipsy.'"

II. A Man's Pride Shall Bring Him Low but He that is of a Lowly Spirit Shall Obtain Honor

The Wages of Sin is Death. History has a nemesis for every sin, the historian Mommsen exclaims. Certainly the student of sacred history must agree with him. How repeatedly have we seen in our study of the books of the Kings and Chronicles that retribution follows sin. The leprosy which suddenly came upon Uzziah is classed among the miracles, but is it any more astonishing or awesome that the nemesis that befell the grafters in Pennsylvania a few years ago? The country was appalled at the disclosure of corruption in connection with the building of a state capitol, when hundreds of thousands of dollars had been stolen by prominent men. A few were put on trial and were convicted. A year later the papers pointed out what retribution had overtaken many of them. The ex-state treasurer had died before he could be taken to the prison to which he had been sentenced. One contractor was very ill, another a nervous wreck, a third was dying of an incurable disease brought on by worry over his disgraces, and the builder had died after a lingering illness brought on by the same cause. The warrant clerk who knew what was going on had died suddenly under suspicion of suicide, and the traveling auditor had become insane.

The Proud Brought Low.

The wind blew strong; the kite soared high.
"I'm something great," said he;
"I'm higher than the weather vane
I'm higher than a tree.
If only they would let me go
I'd float up like a cloud.
My nature scorns the earth below"—
The kite was very proud.
It tossed its head, it swung its tail,
It swerved across the blue.
The wind was blowing half a gale,
And growing stronger, too.
Snap! went the string. With sudden veer
The kite began to fall.
"I'm falling! Hold me up! O dear!"
A swallow heard it call.

But driven down the wind it went,
Until it came to pass
That tumbled, dizzy, breathless, spent,
It lay upon the grass.
Unknown.

Why Pride goeth before Destruction and a Haughty Spirit before a Fall. It is not hard to explain why failure should be the fate of pride. For one thing, it keeps a man from learning, from benefiting by either advice or rebuke. Arrogant self-complacency seals the mind and cuts a man off from any chance of learning the lessons of life.

A second reason for the failure is that pride provokes opposition and hatred. There is an innate desire for justice which makes men everywhere delight when the biter is bit, when the haughty spirit rides for a fall.

More, God hates it. It is foredoomed to failure. "A thing the Lord hates, yea, is an abomination to him—haughty eyes." Retribution is not a penalty appended to pride, but a condition inherent in the very nature of the case. Only to the humble can God give himself: only the child heart can see the kingdom. Condensed from *Listening to God*, by *Hugh Black*.

He that is of a Lowly Spirit shall Obtain Honor. When a great man was asked why God had given him such power over men's hearts, he replied. "I have been thinking of that, and I see how it is. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the earth and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, the smallest, and the meanest man on the face of the earth?' The he saw me and said: 'Now I have found him, and I will work through him. He will not be proud of it. He will see that I am using him only because of his littleness and insignificance'."

The British Missionary society was seeking for a suitable man to send out to help Dr. Morrison in China. A young man of great piety and industry was called before them. After a long talk with them he withdrew and the Committee discussed the advisability of sending him as assistant missionary. "He's too plain and rough," said one of them; "I don't think he will answer at all." Finally it was agreed that if he would be willing to go to Dr. Morrison as a servant, the Society would send him. A brave member of the committee was sent to tell him, Without a moment's hesitation the young man replied with a happy smile: "Yes sir, certainly. I am willing to do anything, so that I am only at work for Jesus. To be 'a hewer of wood or drawer of water' is too great an honor for me when the Lord's house is building." That young man went to China as a servant, but afterwards he became famous as Dr. Milne, one of the most successful of missionaries.

III Out of One's Sphere

A Conflict of Authorities. Uzziah's mistake was, first of all, in getting out of his proper sphere. He had great success in building towers and in training soldiers and in spreading terror to the hearts of his enemies, but he failed signally when he tried to interpret for himself the religious demands of his times. He thought that because his skill had lifted him up above all others in kingcraft and generalship, he was likewise entitled to supreme rule in morals and religion. The narrative before us emphasizes his mistake,

We see even in our own day illustrations of the same mistake. Here is a man at work in a laboratory—a very king in the control of the mysterious force which we call electricity. He can with a gleaming thread turn night into day, and with a revolving cylinder he can catch and preserve the subtlest tones of the human voice. In a vast realm of nature mighty agents run to and fro at the behests of this king. But the king finally gets over into another realm, and declares that the deep needs of the human soul are merely mocked by all our aspirations for immortality, that there is really no such thing as a human soul with splendid dignities on its own account. The king has made a mistake, and the priest has a right to speak out.

Or here is a king in the business world. He has amassed vast fortunes and counts his railroads as a smaller man might count his horses. He has but to speak, and cities languish. He has but to sign an order, and a vast new realm opens to civilization. It may be that the heart of this king, too, is lifted up as was the heart of Uzziah of old, and he flouts the religious sentiment of his time.

In spite of this king's power the priest must again speak forth. *Bishop McConnell*, in *Sunday-school Journal.*

No Man is a Law unto Himself. The besetting sin of strong minds is despotism; his strength naturally gives the strong man the feeling that he has a right to dominate, but no right in this complex world is absolute; every right demands a qualification from some counter right, besides being subject to the general law of moderation. The moment he forgets this the strong man becomes a despot. Despotism, in common parlance, is a political word, but there is a despotism of beauty, of generosity, of any strong passion or high ideal, as well as of power. *John Stuart Blackie.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. *Paul.*

Our Prayer:

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not have dominion over me:
Then shall I be upright,
And I shall be clean from the great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart]
Be acceptable in thy sight,
O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Chronicles. See pages 35–36 of our Introduction.
2. The Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who was the last king of Israel about whom we have studied? 2. What kings followed him? 3. What agent had Hosea once thought would be the instrument through whom God would punish Israel? Hosea 8.13; 9.6.) 4. What were Admah and Zeboiim, and what does the reference to them mean? (Dt. 29.23.) 5. What statement in regard to the difference between God and man is made in Ps. 130.4 and Is. 55.8, 9? 6. What reference to the first verse is there in Matthew? (Mt. 2.15.) 7. Where in the Bible do we have the words, "God is love"? (1 Jn. 4.16.) 8. What did Jesus say about his drawing all men to him?

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of the first verse? (*Guide*, p. 466.) 2. What is the figure of speech in verse 3? (*Guide*, p. 466.) 3. Explain verse 4. (*Guide*, p. 466.) 5. What parable did Jesus give to show God's yearning over backsliders? (Prodigal Son.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Read Longfellow's Sicilian Tale, in Tales of a Wayside Inn, and be able to tell its lesson. In your Biographical Book of the Kings of Judah, write an account of Uzziah's Reign. Follow it with a list of the kings who succeeded him, the date of the fall of Jerusalem, and a statement of the fate of the people of Judah.

Questions upon the Book of Hosea. 1. In what century did Hosea live? 2. In what part of the century did he prophesy? 3. In whose reigns? 4. Why is it thought that he was a native of Judah? 5. How many of the "writing prophets" belonged to Judah? 6. Describe his character. 7. What two interpretations are held in regard to his words about his domestic life? 8. What aspect of Israel's history was brought home to him by his own bitter experience? 9. What great lesson concerning God's love was he taught? 10. What prophet did Hosea follow? 11. What was the character of Jeroboam's reign? 12. What sort of period followed? 13. What were its political conditions? 14. Moral and religious life? 15 Into what two parts does the Book naturally fall? 16 Write an outline of the Book. 17. What is the subject of Part I? 18. What verse tells the main theme of Part II? 19. What evils of the times does the prophet disclose? 20. Give Dr. Harper's summing up of Hosea's message. 21. What is the central idea of his teaching? 22. Compare Hosea with Amos. 23. How does the Second Part differ from the First Part in style? 24. From what are Hosea's figures drawn? 25. What is the best verse in the Book? 26. What are Hosea's lessons for today?

JEHOVAH YEARNS OVER BACKSLIDING ISRAEL

Golden Text

I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. Hosea 11.4

LESSON Hosea 11.1-11 MEMORIZE verses 8, 9

**1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.
2 The more *the prophets* called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. 3 Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them.
4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them.
5 They shall not return into the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be their king, because they refused to return *to me.* 6 And the sword shall fall upon their cities, and shall consume their bars, and devour *them,* because of their own counsels. 7 And my people are bent on backsliding from me: though they call them to *him that is* on high, none at all will exalt *him.***

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. 9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath. 10 They shall walk after Jehovah, who will roar like a lion; for he will roar, and the children shall come trembling from the west. 11 They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; and I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith Jehovah.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *When Israel was a child.* When in bondage in Egypt.—*And called my son out of Egypt.* Delivered Israel from the Egyptian bondage. "Hosea dwells on that beautiful past, half in melancholy reflection on the contrast, and half in persuasive pleading that the old relations between the nation and their God may be restored. The early days in Egypt and the Desert were a history of grace on the part of God. The prophet stops in his message of doom to recall lovingly the early periods of Israel's national existence, and sees God's love claiming them, and meeting with fit response" (*Black*). But recall the application of this verse to the return of Mary and Joseph with the Child, made in Mt. 2.15. "Matthew saw in the history of Israel a typical foreshadowing of the life of our Lord, and so, in accordance with rabbinical methods of interpretation, applied it to Jesus."

3. God is compared with a father who teaches his child to walk and carries it when wearied in his arms.

4. Here the figure changes from that of a child being trained by a parent to that of oxen driven by a considerate master.—*With cords of a man.* Not with reins such as are used for beasts of burden.—*Bands.* Collars.—*As they that lift up the yoke on their jaws.* As the husbandman who removes the yoke from his oxen, taking its burden from their jaws. Oxen have no reins, but are guided by a long goad: the yoke is fixed over the brow near the horns, and thus comes down over the jaws.

5. *They shall not return into the land of Egypt.* Earlier, Hosea had spoken of their punishment being a return to Egypt, Hosea 8. 13; 9.6.—*The Assyrian shall be their king.* They had failed to be influenced by kindness, verse 4; now they shall be punished through the instrumentality of the Assyrians.

6. *Fall upon.* Or, *rage against,* RVm.—*Their bars.* Their defences, referring either to their fortresses or their leaders on whom they were depending for safety.

7. *Though they call them to him that is on high.* Though they profess to call upon God.—*None at all will exalt him.* No one in reality exalts him in his heart.

8. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?* Tenderness again fills Hosea's heart, and he represents God as distracted between love and grief.—*As Admah. . . as Zeboiim?* Cities of the plain that were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah, Dt. 29. 23.

9. *For I am God.* Therefore more longsuffering and less vengeful than man. Compare Ps. 130.4; Is. 55.8, 9.

10. *They shall walk after Jehovah.* Israel will surely repent, Hosea thinks, after they have been punished. "Hosea had very little to say about future events, and what he did say was not fulfilled in any literal sense. Israel never was restored to favor. Assyria brought her finally to the ground. God did not inspire Hosea to prophesy events. He sent events to inspire Hosea. In this respect Hosea represents all the Old Testament prophets and their writings. It was not so much the future as the present and the past that kindled the prophetic fire" (*Newton Marshall*).—*Who will roar like a lion.* So loud will be his call to his erring children in captivity.—*The children shall come trembling from the west.* Out of Egypt, as the next verse states.

11. *Out of Egypt.* This seems a contradiction of verse 5. The One Volume Commentary thus explains the two verses: They shall not go into Egypt (verse 5); and even should they go (verse 11), thence will I bring them—a form of thought similar to that in 9.11, 12.—*As a dove.* The most timid of birds.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

10. *They shall walk after Jehovah.* Rabbi Seira tells us how, at one time, he had been scandalized by seeing the rabbis running on the Sabbath—when bodily rest was enjoined—to attend a sermon; but that, when he understood how Hosea 11.10 applied to the teaching, he himself joined in their race. *Dr. Edersheim,* in *Sketches of Jewish Social Life.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What was our first lesson of the year? What was its Golden Text? In what way were Israelites bent on backsliding during the time of the Judges? What prophets had called to the Israelites since to return to Jehovah? What was the state of affairs in the Northern Kingdom as disclosed by Amos?

The Condition in Israel. When Hosea was a young man, Jeroboam II was king of Israel. How strong was his rule and how powerful the kingdom in his day, we saw two weeks ago. Then Jeroboam died; Assyria completely absorbed Syria and raided the borders of Israel remorselessly; social disorders, idolatrous excesses, sapped the kingdom from within; king followed king upon the throne—Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea—until, as we shall see next week, the expeditions of Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon II finally put an end to the kingdom. It was in the time of Israel's disasters from without and within that Hosea lived. He had heard the denunciations of Amos, that prophet who came from Judah to warn Israel and had prophesied the very troubles that were now coming to pass. To understand how he came himself to prophesy and warn, and how he came by that great thought of his whole Book—that God is love—a study of his Book as a whole is necessary. See pp. 40–43 of our Introduction.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

What patience and love fail to do, criticism and blame will not accomplish. "Christ used force only once, and that was to drive profane ones out of his temple, not to force them in. There must be a gentle, gracious, loving quality in all our rebukes; and a background of hopeful belief if they are to have any healing virtue." This is a principle that every successful teacher has made his own.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

Show your pupils Tissot's picture of Hosea, No. 108. The prophet has his hand uplifted, as he did when he talked to the people of Israel about their sins and warned them that they should be punished. But with this warning, Hosea had a special message for them, and that message was that God is love. Take this thought as your theme today, with no special reference to the lesson text. Conclude with the story of the downfall of Samaria, next week's lesson. God is love, but God is also justice, and when the people would not heed the warnings given

them, would not love and obey God in return for all his love and care for them, the time came when they had to meet their punishment. Next week take the Christmas Lesson.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

"Oh, I fear him," said his little daughter,
"And I try to love him, too;
But I wish he was good and gentle,
Kind and loving, just like you."

Thus the Minister's Daughter speaks of God in Whittier's poem. She had yet to learn that God is not only a loving Father, but that "God is love." The prophet Hosea learned this great truth in the far-away times which we are studylng. What is our Golden Text?

For Older Pupils. Begin with a talk about the prophet Hosea and his writing. See pp. 40–43, of our Introduction.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. I Drew Them with Bands of Love

Hosea's Great Truth. For the first time in history it dawned upon the human mind that God's sovereign attribute in heaven and in earth is his lovingkindness. The words almost tremble on the prophet's lips, though it was reserved for an apostle to utter them, that "God is love." Later seers and poets would express the truth in many other noble and beautiful forms, but there is a mingling of burning passion and melting pathos in Hosea's primitive Hebrew gospel—his protevangelium—which makes it for ever memorable. For the first time it is seen that the real and fundamental difference between God and man is not his almightiness appalling our impotence, his greatness dwarfing our littleness, his omniscience amazing our ignorance, but his love shaming our lovelessness. That is the quintessence of Deity. By loving and redeeming where it was natural, as all the world thought, to loathe and reject (see p. 41), Hosea instinctively separated himself from men, took sides with God, and suddenly found himself caught up to a height from which he could see, as man had never seen before, that

Broad and deep and glorious,
Like the heavens above,
Shines in might victorious,
God's eternal love.

For how many thousands, or millions, of years had the living God been waiting for some mind to mirror and reveal his true nature to man! *James Strahan*, in *Expository Times*.

The Meaning of Hosea's Figure. If we have any spiritual insight we must see that God has been in all our life, loving us from earliest days, teaching us first by instinctive faith, with the care and patience of a father; accepting from us childish, almost unconscious trust, though we may not have known that he healed us. "I girded thee, though thou didst not know me." And then when the burden of life came upon us, when we had to bend our neck to the yoke like laboring cattle, he made us strong by the assurance of his sympathy. Even in the experience that was hardest to understand, one day it comes to us with the force of a revelation that God has been teaching and training us. It is this that makes the religious man, and distinguishes him from the irreligious. Upon all men are laid the trials and tasks of life; to all men come the burden and the yoke. To most it comes in the form of work, the daily routine and drudgery. In what are we different from the draught-oxen that plod with their load? In what so good, if they know their master and respond to his word and move to his touch? It is here is seen the inspiring power of religion, the sense of carrying the burdens for God, that, like the wagoner to his team, he has set us to the work, and given us the task.

The religious man knows that God is in all his experience, ever drawing him with cords of a man, with bands of love. This consciousness of the Divine sym-

pathy makes a man strong, and assures him that life is worth living since it commands the interest of heaven. In the inspiring power of God's love we are not dumb driven cattle who can understand nothing but the lash; we are instead co-workers with God, and he becomes as a man beside us, with gentle sympathy and helpful kindness.

The story of Christ's wonderful life, full of compassion and human sympathy, the grace and truth of his lips, the pity and tenderness of his deeds, his life for love, and death for love, through it all does he not draw us with cords of a man? If in Christ we have a revelation of the Father, if Jesus stands to us for God, how in the face of all that he was and did can we doubt the eternal love of God? The whole story thrills with human tenderness, with human sympathy, sympathy with men in their joy and their sorrow, sympathy with the little child, and with all on whom the yoke pressed, the laboring and heavy-laden. To all according to their needs he sacrificed, melting us by his human compassion, claiming us for his love's sake, drawing us by the cords of a man, holding us by the bands of love. Who will not respond to such entreaty? *Condensed* from *Christ's Service of Love*, by *Hugh Black*.

God's Love. Standing on the top of the Cheviot Hills, his little son's hands closed in his, a father taught the truth of God's boundless love (as told in "Thoughts for the King's Children"). Pointing northward over Scotland, and southward over England, and eastward over the German Ocean, and westward over hill and dale, and then, sweeping his hand around the whole circling horizon, he said: "Johnny, my boy, God's love is as big as all that!" "Why father," the boy replied with sparkling eyes, "then we must be in the middle of it."

And Yet God Loves Me.

To think of it! He knows me
Through and through;
And yet he loves me,
Tenderly and true.

Arthur B. Rhinow.

I will Heal their Backsliding, I will Love them. As a mother bears with a wayward child believing in something which, though she sees no sign of it, she hopes one day to see; as her love holds out in after days when it may be the years have failed to realize that good which she dreamed about her boy; as she still sees him in her mother's heart, not him the mistake or the shame, not him as he is, but him as he might have been, him in the light of her desire; as she still protests that her child is something more and something better than has ever appeared; as she never really gives him up as bad, as lost; or if she gave him up would in that hour cease to be his mother according to the spirit; so God our Father in Heaven abides us all, endures the awful disappointments of time in the hope that some day the sin, the madness, will pass out of our blood, and in the train of Jesus Christ we shall come home to God. *Condensed* from *At Close Quarters*, by *John A. Hutton*.

How the Response to God's Love Comes. There is such a thing as putting ourselves in the way of God's overflowing love, and letting it break upon us till the response of love to him comes, not by struggle, not even by deliberation, but by necessity, as the echo comes when the sound strikes the rock. *Phillips Brooks*.

A Distinctive Truth of Christianity. Before the door of the "Temple of Hell" in China, there is a gigantic image of Satan, and within there are rows of the most hideous-looking idols, before which the Chinese come and worship. An American visited this Temple on the Chinese New Year and saw a young father carrying in his arms his baby boy. When the little fellow was brought before one of these fearful images he gave one glance at it and screamed with terror. The father knelt, and, forcing the baby hands together roughly, knocked the little forehead against the stone, that he, too, might join in the worship. Thus the children in China are taught to pray, and thus in infancy they are taught to fear terrible gods.

The truth of the love of God is distinctive of Christianity in contrast with other religions. "It justifies the missions of Christianity in other lands," writes Dean Hodges in "The Training of Children in Religion." "The purpose of missions is to bring to others this distinctive truth of the fatherhood of God and

along with it other truths implied in the love of God, and declared in the will of God as we understand it. This we do to drive out fear and put love in the place of it. It is for the sake of the health of the soul, for the sake of human happiness here and now. We have a source of happiness which we would share with others. It helps us in our sorrow, and strengthens us in difficulty, and makes the whole world pleasant. It is our consciousness of the love of God."

And the answer to the question, How do we gain our assurance of the divine fatherly affection? Dean Hodges gives as follows: "We know the love of God by the revelation of the Son of God. We take it sometimes in the face of what seem contradictory experiences, and cling to it through hardships which we cannot understand, because of what he said. Nature gives us no unfailing confidence in the love of God; history seems sometimes to bring in evidence against the love of God. But he who knows God speaks, and in his word and life declares, and on the cross declares again, that our pain is not a negation of God's love. The Son of God was acquainted with grief. But he called God Father in the face of it all. He proclaimed the gospel of the love of God."

II. How Shall I Give Thee Up?

The Waiting of God. The waiting of God? How can that be? When we think of him we remember the mighty enterprises which engage him. New worlds to shape and fling out upon their course; old worlds to hold in his hand; nations to lead along the pathway of the ages; empires to shake into a consciousness that right is right and God is God; little republics which honor God to be exalted—surely all this must give God no time for waiting.

And yet it is only because we have not lifted our eyes from our playthings, the daily cares and the frettings and the worryings, that we have not seen the face of God bending down over us in tenderest longing. It is because our ears have been so confused with the noises of this world of ours that we have not heard him say to us so gently, "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto thee!" *Edgar L. Vincent.*

The Sensitive Heart of God. The measure of greatness in any living thing is sensitiveness to suffering. A stone suffers not at all, it has no life. The oyster suffers a little, it has a single nerve. The bird is higher, and suffers for two or three days when its nest is robbed. Higher still the deer, that goes every whither moaning for its fawn, and whose suffering lasts for weeks. The Indian mother is higher, and remembers her babe through the summer and the winter. But what sensitiveness comes when the Christian mother appears! Her mother-love worships her babe almost as a form of divinity. One night she wrestles with the death-angel and is defeated. The years come and the years go, but still the memory of the child is with her. A half-century passes. Time avails not to cool the ardor of her love. But though a mother forget her child, God doth not forget his sinning sons and daughters. Higher than a mother's and more sensitive is the heart of God.

The æolian harp is so sensitive that the softest zephyr awakens music among its strings, and there is no heartache, and no pain, and no cry of the transgressor that does not touch the strings of sensitiveness and sympathy in the mind of God. For he who beholds his pilgrim band going across the years stumbling, wandering, falling, bleeding, dying, follows each pilgrim heart with exquisite sympathy and with infinite solicitude.

The angel of his providence goes before the prodigal son. The angel of his goodness encamps on the right hand; the angel of his bounty encamps on the left. The angel of his mercy follows after to correct the transgressor's mistakes and undo his sins. At last God's love will find you out and bring you back from the husks into the Father's house. Men have misunderstood the nature of God. They have emphasized his justice. Yet justice without love is mere vengeance. God comes to seek and save the lost. Your sin cannot exhaust his love, your years of vagrancy cannot tire. He places inestimable value upon the soul he has made. His love burns on and at last will conquer and bring you home. *Condensed* from *The Contagion of Character*, by *Dr. Hillis.*

I will Never Leave Thee. Some days you will fail in aim and will not have any conscious impulse to fulfil your pledges to Christ. He will seem to recede farther and farther away into the background of your thought. "Can it be that these words stand good in such days?" you ask. "Even when I do

not feel like giving myself to the effort of discipleship, will Jesus come and work in me? Even when, with my eyes wide open, I am so beguiled as to choose sin instead of choosing the pathway of obedience and holiness, will he still be near me?" He will not leave you. You may, and probably will, lose the consciousness of his presence in consequence of wilful sin. But you will not lose his presence. He has said "Lo, I am with you always; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and he never breaks his promise.

His love in such days as those must needs find a new voice. And his voice in those days must needs say perhaps hard and stringent things. For when we have sinned we do not need comfort. We need chiding and correction and discipline. And he will give this to us. When we have sinned we do not need sympathy. Sometimes we need nothing so much as severity. And Christ will speak severely when we need the severe voice. But always remember that whatever he has to say to us it is the voice of love which speaks. Always remember that his purpose is unchanged and unchecked by our fitfulness and our failure. *Condensed* from *The Life of Fuller Purpose*, by *J. Stuart Holden.*

III. All's Love and Yet All's Law

God is Love, but His Love is not a Weak Sentiment. God's love does not impel him to condone offences against the moral law, and to accept amiable intentions on the part of men in place of positive performance of that which is good. The Divine love is not merely good nature—it is the love of goodness. The Almighty is a moral Being, and must regard his own law. Our God is a consuming fire—let not that truth be forgotten, God so loves men that he would love them out of their sin and into holiness. There is nothing which today more needs to be clarified than the idea of the love of God. *Zion's Herald.*

All's Law and yet All's Love. The poet's phrase. "All's love and yet all's law" has imprinted itself deeply on the modern mind. But it is even more true in the reverse. "All's law and yet all's love." That, at least, with unmeasured emphasis, is the message of Christ's Gospel to mortal men. The laws of nature, in all their fearful resistlessness, are love to us so long as we obey them. It is we ourselves who turn their goodness into severity, by our neglect or disobedience. They are only crushing when we are rebellious. And their general working together for the good of humanity, is so marked as to warrant the inference that the very severity of the punishment, when men set nature's laws at defiance, is intended to teach them that they are turning away from good to ill, and are making fearful foes of the very forces which would be their best friends. Physical illustrations of moral truths are necessarily incomplete, but we may well mark how the water which generally serves us so well in its life-sustaining properties, turns to generally unhelpful if not death-dealing ice in presence of cold. Yet is every threatening iceberg, all the time, potentially water. So does the whole Bible teach us, but more especially the message of Jesus, that the love of God, however real and tender, is hardened into anger and becomes fearful when it is met by moral evil, or treated with rebellion's cold disdain. None the less is the very wrath of God, always and only, potential love. *Condensed* from *Why Does Not God Intervene?* by *Dr. Frank Ballard.*

A Sure Paymaster. My lord Cardinal, there is one fact which you seem entirely to have forgotten. God is a sure paymaster. He may not pay at the end of every week, or month, or year; but I charge you, remember that he pays in the end. *Anne of Au tria.*

Be not Deceived; God is not Mocked. There are nations and individuals rich in spiritual privilege and blessing. It was so with Israel. "What advantage, then, hath the Jew Much every way." Ages of reprieve, a succession of prophets, a wealth of gracious influences, and nothing in the end except wild grapes. How admonitory o England and to me!

If we imitate the self-will, the carnal-mindedness, the pride of the Jew, we shall share his ruin. We are told that in Japan there is a traffic in rice seed said to possess magical properties. Whatever crop you wish to grow, this seed will produce it. Only sow the rice and pray. There will arise barley, wheat, maize, watermelons, according to your heart's desire. So we popularly cheat ourselves into the belief that by some magic things will eventually turn out satisfactorily, no matter how we live and act.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We cannot be disloyal to God, false to our Master, and escape

the just consequences. We cannot sow to the flesh; sow covetousness, insobriety, dishonor, wrath and pride, and reap the fruits of Paradise. *Rev. W. L. Watkinson.*

George Eliot's Study of this Principle. In Romola, the orphan child Tito is received into the arms of an adopted father, who lavishes upon him all his wealth. But when the youth was grown to full strength, one night Tito left his adopted father in slavery and fled with his gold and his gems into a foreign land. Years passed by and, with his stolen wealth, Tito bought wife, palace, position, fame. He had sown falsehood and cruelty, and nothing seemed so unlikely as that he would reap a similar harvest. But one day the people discovered his falsehood and attacked Tito. A mob pursued him through the streets, and, knowing his strength as a swimmer, the youth cast himself into the River Arno. When Tito had swum far down the river to the other side, and, in his exhaustion, would go ashore, he looked up, and, lo! he discerned the gray-haired father whom he had injured trotting along the shore side by side with the swimmer. In the old man's eyes blazed bitter hatred, in his hand flashed a sharp knife. What the youth had sown years before, now at last he was to reap. When increasing weakness compelled him to approach the shore he looked beseechingly to his father for mercy, but found only justice. With a wild and bitter cry, Tito reaped his harvest. Soon the mud of that river filled the eyes and ears of him who years before had received defilement into his heart. What seed he had sown, that Nature gave him as a harvest—good measure, heaped up, and shaken together. *Dr. Hillis.*

Sin's Progress. In our childhood we were thrilled with the old tale of Jack the Giant Killer. With eyes wide open we followed him up his long ladder to the moon and laughed and cried and paled and trembled, for there he met a giant of titanic build, whose custom was to gobble up all foreign intruders. When the giant undertook to seize Jack, the wily lad laid a trap by which the giant tumbled headlong earthwards, and was dashed into divers pieces. Thus does the old amusing legend teach a great moral truth, that all sin is retroactive, and strikes home.

Agrippina puts her husband to death to enthrone her son Nero, and what does Nero do to hold his throne but put Agrippina to death. This is Sin's never-failing program. Benaiah slays the Egyptian with his own spear. Each thief steals from himself. Each murderer takes his own life. "Put a fetter on the foot of a slave," says Emerson, "and the other end fastens around your own." *Malcolm J. McLeod.*

Where Sin is Registered. All sin registers itself in your body. Even such sins as anger, jealousy, envy, pride, ill-will, hatred, have physical results. A fit of anger upsets your stomach, poisons your blood, disorders your nerves, and oftentimes results in paralysis and death.

In your character. Every lie you tell poisons your moral blood and undermines your moral constitution. Wherever else your sin finds you out, it will find you out in your own character every time.

In your conscience. In the mercy of God you are so constructed that to be conscious of sin means agony—nothing can soothe the torment of an accusing conscience.

In your children. God does visit the sins of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.

In eternity. Death does not end all; there is a life beyond the grave and into that life we carry our sins and their consequences. *Dr. R. A. Torrey.*

Because of our Own Acts.

We would have inward peace,
Yet will not look within;
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin;
We want all pleasant ends,
But will use no harsh means.
We do not do what we ought,
What we ought not we do;
And lean upon the thought
That chance will bring us through;
But our own acts, for good or ill, are mightier powers.

Matthew Arnold.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

We know enough from the history of men and nations since Sodom until today, to realize it is God's plan to alternate long patience and "sudden destruction:"

"The mill of God grinds slowly,
But it grinds exceeding small;"

and every such instance confirms the expectation of the coming of that great and terrible day of the Lord, whereof all epochs of convulsion and ruin, all falls of Samaria and Jerusalem and Roman empires, Reformations, and French Revolutions, and American wars, all private and personal calamities which come from private wrongdoing, are but feeble precursors. Do we use aright this goodness of God which is the characteristic of the present? Are we ready for that judgment which is the mark of the future? *Dr. Alexander Maclaren.*

Our Prayer: We beseech thee, Lord, be patient still; suffer us yet awhile longer; with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavors against evil, suffer us a while longer to endure, and help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with us ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labor—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it. We thank thee and praise thee. *Robert Louis Stevenson.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Hosea. See our Introduction.
2. The love of God. See the Lesson Topics, and "At Large," *Putnam's*, June, 1908; "How can I love God, an Unseen Personality?" *Outlook*, Dec. 16, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How many kings were there in Israel between Jeroboam and Hoshea, and how did their reigns come to an end? (2 K. 15. 8–31; *Guide*, p. 476.) 2. To what king of Assyria did Hoshea pay tribute, and under what king was the nation taken captive? 3. In what year was Samaria taken? 4. How long did the Northern Kingdom last? 5. Who was king in Judah when the end came in the Northern Kingdom? 6. What record of Sargon II is there in regard to the capture of Samaria? (*Guide*, p. 477.) 7. What causes that led to the captivity does the writer of Kings enumerate? 8. What does the figure of speech, "hardened their necks," mean 9. Read David's warning of what the results of forsaking God would be, 1 Ch. 28.1–9. 10. Read Amos's prediction of the captivity, 7.1–9. 11. Read Isaiah's words in regard to the fall of Samaria, 28.1–4. 12. How long did Judah remain an independent kingdom after the fall of Samaria? 13. What was the fate of Judah?

Questions to Think About. 1. When did we hear about Jehovah's casting out the nations before the Israelites? 2. Name some of the prophets who had warned Israel. 3. The prophets who had warned Judah. 4. Which two kings of Israel did the most to turn the people from the worship of Jehovah? (Jeroboam, who introduced calf-worship, and Ahab, who introduced the worship of Baal.) 5. What does "walking in the statutes of the nations" mean? 6. What were the high places, pillars, Asherim? (*Guide*, p. 476.) 7. What advantages and what disadvantages had Israel had over Judah? (*Guide*, p. 478.) 8. What external causes led to the Captivity? 9. What became of the ten tribes of Israel? 10. What was the origin of the Samaritans of the time of the Gospels? (2 K. 17.24–41 and *Guide*, p. 477.)

Note-Book Work. In your Book of Four Prophets, write the Story of Hosea.

LESSON XII—DECEMBER 19

THE FALL AND CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL

Golden Text

**He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck
Shall suddenly be destroyed. Proverbs 29.1**

LESSON II Kings 17.1-18: verses 7-14, 18 printed
MEMORIZE verses 7, 8

7 And it was so, because the children of Israel had sinned against Jehovah their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 8 and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they made. 9 And the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God: and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city; 10 and they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree; 11 and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger; 12 and they served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. 13 Yet Jehovah testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14 Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah their God. . . 18 Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *In the twelfth year of Ahaz.* The writer is dating the event by the history of the Kingdom of Judah. Hoshea is sometimes called Hosea; do not confound this king of Israel with the prophet of that name.

3. *Shalmaneser.* The Assyrian monuments show that this king reigned between Tiglath-pileser and Sargon II, 727–722 B.C.—*Brought him tribute.* This, Shalmaneser required in acknowledgement of Israel's being subject to Assyria.

4. *He had sent messengers to So, King of Egypt.* Hoshea was thus secretly seeking alliance with Assyria's enemy. "So, whose name should perhaps be written Seve, is generally identified with Sabako, the first king of the twenty-fifth dynasty, though some authorities regard him as a petty prince who was vassal of the Pharaoh."—*The King of Assyria shut him* (Hoshea) *up.* As for Samaria, her king was cut off as the foam upon the water, Hos. 10.7.

5. *Besieged it three years.* What could little Israel hope to accomplish against Assyria with all her enormous resources? Yet Israel offered a stubborn resistance.

6. *The King of Assyria took Samaria.* Shalmaneser had meanwhile died, and this king was his successor, Sargon II, who reigned from 723 to 705 B.C.—*Carried Israel away into Assyria.* Thus the Northern Kingdom, "the lost Ten Tribes," was blotted out from the pages of history. It was Tiglath-pileser who first introduced the system of deportation, 1 Ch. 5.26. According to Sargon's inscription, 27, 280 were carried away captive; many must have been left in the land, see 2 Ch. 34.9 and p. 477.—For the places mentioned see the Geographical Background.

7. *It was so because.* Here follows a summary of the causes that led to the captivity: Dr. Maclaren calls them "a post-mortem inquiry into the diseases that killed a Kingdom." Note that the overwhelming might of the Assyrian Empire is not regarded as a real cause at all. The sacred writer is giving the spiritual and moral meaning of the history.—*Who brought them up out of the land of Egypt.* Ex. 14.15–30.—*Had feared other gods.* See Judges 6.10.

8. *Walked in the statutes of the nations.* Lived as did the heathen nations.—*Whom Jehovah cast out from before the children of Israel.* The native races of Canaan, told about in the Book of Judges.—*And of the kings of Israel.* Compare the oft-repeated remark about the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherein he made Israel to sin.—*Which.* The statutes.

9. *Did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah.* "This refers to the attempt to continue the worship of God and of idols: the charge is of covering idolatry with a cloak of Jehovah worship" (*Maclaren*).—*High places.* Idolatrous shrines where the Caananites had held their heathen rites.—*From the towers of the watchmen to the fortified city.* The towers were for the lonely watchmen, who guarded their flocks far from the cities, such as King Uzziah built, Lesson X. The words show how the land abounded with such idolatrous places.

10. *They set them up pillars.* These were columns of stone erected beside altars as symbols of the god worshipped there. Images later took the place of the pillars.—*Asherim.* These were columns of wood placed beside an altar.

12. *Jehovah had said unto them.* Ex. 20.5; Dt. 12.31.

13. *Jehovah testified by every prophet.* As we have seen throughout the year's course, the prophets proclaimed God's will, exhorting and warning the people.—*Unto Israel.* Through Ahijah, Jehu the son of Hanani, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Jonah, Obed, Amos and Hosea.—*Unto Judah.* Through Shemaiah, Iddo, Azariah, Hanani, Jehu, Zechariah the son of Jehoaida, Micah, and Isaiah.—*Seer.* He that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer, 1 S. 9.9.

14. *Hardened their neck like to the neck of their fathers.* See Ex. 32.9; 33.3; Isa. 28.1–4; Acts 7.51. "Like some perverse ox in the yoke, stiffening his neck and standing the very picture of brute obstinacy." (*Maclaren.*)

15. *Vanity.* Idols. "The nothingness of idols, a breath, a bubble. Following a nothing they became good-for-nothing—would in some measure give the play on the word" (*Wood*).

16. *All the host of heaven.* The stars.

17. *They caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire.* They practised the cruelest rites of the heathen. In the hollow interior of the god Moloch a fire was kindled, and when the arms became red hot, children were thrown into them and burned to death.

18. *Therefore Jehovah.* Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? *Job.*—*And removed them.* "The wages of sin are always paid: if there is any delay in settlement, compound interest is added" (*Youth's Companion*).—*Cut of his sight.* Palestine is thought of as especially the land of God's presence.—*The tribe of Judah only.* The tribes of Benjamin, Simeon and Dan had been merged with that of Judah.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *Hoshea had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria.* This intrigue afterwards brought on a war between Sargon and So, or Sabaco, in which at length the Assyrians were victorious.

Impressions of the seals of most of the Assyrian monarchs may be seen in the British Museum: these were impressed on clay, which was then burnt and affixed to the document: and without a seal none were valid. Often the document has perished, but the seal remains, perforated for the thongs which attached it, and of which the ashes can be detected. On one of these pieces of clay are the seals of the king of Assyria and "So," king of Egypt, side by side. The lump of clay was found at Nimroud and the holes through which passed the parchment thong that attached it can be seen. On it are the distinctly legible impressions of two seals side by side, with the marks in the clay of the finger and thumb which impressed it. Tirhakah, the king defeated by the Assyrians near Lachish, was So's immediate successor. A peace having been concluded between the two monarchs, the royal signets, thus found together, were attached to the treaty which was laid up in the royal archives. While the document has perished by time this singular proof of the alliance is still preserved, forming one of the most remarkable instances on record of the illustration of Scripture history. *H. B. Tristram,* in *Eastern Customs.*

6. *The king of Assyria took Samaria.* This king, Sargon II, called himself, "Sargon the Later" to distinguish him from the illustrious Sargon I, who lived about 3800 B. C. He founded a magnificent city at Dur-Sargon, the modern

Khorsbad, near the site of old Nineveh. His palace, which covered twenty-five acres and was fortified by walls and towers, was one of the most gorgeous of the East. In the ruins of his palace, uncovered in 1843 by the French consul Emile Botta, large numbers of inscriptions and bas-reliefs illustrative of his reign have been discovered. One inscription is as follows: "Samerina (Samaria) I besieged, I captured. 27,290 people dwelling in it, I carried away. 50 chariots I collected from them and the rest (of the people) I allowed to retain their possessions. My commander-in-chief I placed over them, and the tribute of the former king I

Jewish Captives

placed upon them." In another parallel text these words are added: "I settled there the men of countries conquered by my hand"; see verse 24 of our chapter.

11. *The high places.* All ancient peoples have worshipped upon the heights, for there they seem to have felt themselves nearest to the Deity who dwelt, as they believed, above the earth. Sacrifices were their means of communing with Deity, and therefore altars were erected.

These ancient deities are not yet wholly dead, Dr. R. A. S. Macalister tells us in his "History of Civilization in Palestine." They survive in the cult of the local shrines. There is not a landscape in Palestine which is not dominated by one of the white-domed hill-top sanctuaries, now dedicated to the memory of some true-believing Moslem who acquired sanctity in one way or another, but notwithstanding still carrying on, under a thin disguise, the tradition of the primitive hill-top shrines. The high places have not even yet been taken away, and the oath by the sheikh is far more binding locally than an oath by the Supreme Being. Within sight of Gezer is the shrine of the Sheikh Selma. Accuse a man of theft, and he will swear by Allah to his innocence in the most emphatic way. Conduct him to Sheikh Selma and ask him to place his hand on the tomb and then to take an oath of innocence, and it will not be difficult to discover the truth from his behavior under such an ordeal.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who were the native people of Canaan? Whom did they worship? What influences did they have upon the Israelites? Who is the first king that "caused Israel to sin" and what was his offense? What other evil kings did Israel have? What good kings? What prophets warned the people to turn from their sins?

How Israel Came under the Dominion of Assyria. The last great king of Israel was Jeroboam II who died while Uzziah (lesson X) was on the throne of Judah. Israel then entered on the last stage of its history: king after king ascended the throne, misruled for a brief period and was assassinated: moral and religious chaos reigned within, such as the prophets Amos and Hosea describe; and dangers continually threatened from without, for Assyria was bent on conquering the kingdom, and Egypt was looking on with jealous gaze.

Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II, after a few months' reign was slain by Shallum, and Shallum after only a month on the throne was slain by Menahem. Menahem gave tribute of a thousand talents of silver to Tiglath-pileser III which he exacted from the rich men in his kingdom for that king's protection. (Tiglath-pileser was a Babylonian prince formerly known as Pulu or Pul, 2 K. 15.19, who had usurped the throne of Assyria.)

Menahem's son Pekahiah was slain after a brief reign and his throne seized by Pekah, one of his officers. Pekah so feared the power of Assyria, that he formed a confederacy with Rezin, the king of Syria, that nation which had been Israel's bitter foe for more than a century, and the two tried to force Ahaz, king of Judah, to join them against Assyria. Ahaz refused, Pekah and Rezin invaded his territory and carried many captives back to Samaria, whose release the prophet Oded secured. Ahaz paid no heed to Isaiah's warnings and appealed to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria for aid. The latter attacked Israel and Syria. In 734 B.C. he conquered northern Israel as far south as the plain of Esdraelon and took thousands away captive, and in 732 Damascus "fell before him." A large clay tablet found in the ruins of the palace at Nimroud, and now in the British Museum, contains the official records of his reign. It begins thus: Palace of Tukulti-Apil-Esharra, the Great King, the powerful king, the king of the world, the king of Assyria, the King of Babylon, the king of the land of Shinar and Accad, the king of the Four Quarters; the mighty, the brave, who by help of Asshun his Lord brake in pieces like a potter's vessel the whole of them that obeyed him not, like a flood overwhelmed them, and gave them over to the wind."

Tiglath-pileser claims to have slain Pekah and to have appointed Hoshea in his stead and to have exacted from him a tribute of a thousand talents of silver and ten talents of gold. The Bible narrative says that Hoshea slew Pekah; doubtless Hoshea owed his position to Assyria.

The Fall of Samaria and Captivity of the Leading Israelites. In 728 B. C., Tiglath-pileser died and the throne of Assyria passed to Shalmaneser IV (727–723). Shalmaneser invaded Israel and exacted tribute of Hoshea. After a few years Hoshea refused to send the tribute required, and Shalmaneser learned that he was trying to secure the aid of So, the king of Egypt. Hoshea was imprisoned, Samaria was besieged for three years by the Assyrian forces and then taken, and the people were carried away captive to Assyria. Sargon II had meanwhile come to the throne of Assyria, and he had the Israelites settled in different parts of the Assyrian Empire, in Halah and on the Habor and in the cities of the Medes. The faith of these widely scattered groups was not strong enough to keep them loyal to Jehovah, and they disappeared as a people, being doubtless assimilated by the Assyrians among whom they were settled.

Assyrians Before a Besieged City

Sargon brought colonists from Babylon and other eastern cities to take the place of the Israelites in Samaria. From these Assyrians and the Israelites left in the land (for not all were deported) the Samaritans descended, about whom we hear in the Gospels, and the little group who still live at Nablus, the ancient Shechem.

It was the sin of Israel that led to her captivity, the sacred writer explains in our lesson text. The people had been ungrateful to Jehovah who had delivered them from bondage to the Pharaoh of Egypt, they had feared other gods and had followed the laws of heathen nations about them; they had tried to serve both Jehovah and false gods; they had offered sacrifices on high places throughout the land and had erected on high places and under green trees columns of stone and wooden pillars contrary to the law; they had burnt incense in the high places as did the heathen nations; and they had served idols, although Jehovah had said "Ye shall not do this." All these things had aroused Jehovah's anger. Yet he had sent prophets and seers to warn them, to urge them to turn from their evil ways and keep his commandments. Notwithstanding all their pleading, the people would not hear, they hardened their hearts, rejected Jehovah's laws, sought to do as the nations around them did, made molten images, even two calves and other idols, worshipped the stars, served Baal, practised the most cruel heathen rites, used enchantments—in short, sold themselves to do that which was evil. The measure of their iniquity was full. Therefore they and theirs were taken away captive from the land of their inheritance.

Samaria was taken in 722 B. C. The Northern Kingdom had lasted 215 years after the division of Solomon's kingdom in 937 B. C. During this time there were nine dynasties and nineteen kings, while in Judah there was but one dynasty, save for Athaliah's reign, and there were only twelve kings.

Why Judah Lasted longer than Israel. Judah remained an independent kingdom for nearly 133 years longer, when in 588 B. C. it was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. That Israel's downfall preceded that of Judah was really due to the very causes which gave it its greater importance, Professor Wade explains. "Its superiority to the Southern Kingdom was the consequence of its advantage in respect not only of extent and fertility, but of trading facilities, inasmuch as it was traversed by the principal commercial routes leading from Egypt to Phœnicia and the Euphrates. But its wealth and productiveness excited cupidity, whilst its situation upon the great arteries of traffic which swelled its prosperity, rendered it accessible to invasion, as is shown by the repeated sieges sustained by its capital, Samaria. Judah, on the other hand, though smaller and weaker, was much less vulnerable. It lay off the main line of march pursued by the armies of the greater Eastern powers; and when penetrated, offered little to repay the cost of acquisition. Judah's isolation and comparative poverty were thus sources of strength and enabled it to outlast by nearly a hundred and fifty years its more favored rival."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Assyria was originally a small district lying south and west of the Mountains of Kurdistan, Armenia, east of the Tigris River and north of the Upper Zab. The limits of the kingdom were extended till it included all Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and parts of Asia Minor and Egypt. Nineveh, its capital, was on the Tigris River six hundred miles from the Gulf of Persia.

The location of Halah is not known, but it is believed to have been in Northern Mesopotamia. The Habor is the river now known as the Khabour, a tributary of the Euphrates. Gozan was a part of Mesopotamia. The cities of the Medes were south of the Caspian Sea.

Draw a map including Assyria and the region westward to the Mediterranean. Locate Samaria, Damascus, and Nineveh. See p. 442.

THE LESSON'S SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Our first lesson of the year called for a taking account of stock: how is it with us now? The close of the year naturally leads us as teachers to examine the way by which we have come. Have we and all those given us to guide a greater love for God and men, and a greater desire to serve him and them, than when we began the year? If we have been faithful in the task entrusted us, we need not be discouraged though the results are not in evidence. Let us take heart for another year of work for God, knowing that results can safely be left in his hands. "We soon lose sight of any little contribution that we may make to the common good, but that is of no consequence," observes Dr. Watkinson in a Christmas message to his teachers. "The Africans say, 'The meat may be boiled into shreds, but it is still in the pot.' We lose sight of the working of our gift or endeavor, but it none the less enriches the general life of mankind. Put your contribution into the treasury of the king, and as surely as you live you shall in due time receive your own with usury."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS

If you live in a city, ask your pupils about the posters they have seen on the billboards, and why they are put there. Then describe the large, beautiful poster printed in twelve colors that was seen two years ago at Christmas in 3700 cities and towns in the United States and Canada. The picture showed a babe in the arms of his mother, and a man standing near her. On the left there was a group of shepherds with lambs in their arms, and on the right were three men with gifts in their hands. Outside the door were camels, and in the dark sky there was one very bright star. Then in the corner were printed these words, "Ask your Sunday-school teacher to tell you the story." Ask your pupils whether you shall tell them the story or will they tell it to you.

Then talk about the message and spirit of Christmas. The Third Topic is written for you.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. It is said that when Alexander the Great once laid siege to a city he had a great lantern set up and kept burning day and night as a signal to the besieged. He notified them that as long as the lamp burned they had time to save themselves by surrender, but when once the light was extinguished, the city and all that were in it would be given over to destruction without mercy. Throughout the year's course we have seen such a lamp burning, as it were, for the people of Israel. At any time they might have surrendered wholly to their great King and all would have been well. Now we have reached the climax of the story, the light is extinguished, the time for mercy is past.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I. The Stiffnecked

He that being often Reproved Hardeneth his Neck. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him for their watchman; if, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood must be upon him.

These words of the prophet Ezekiel uttered later to Judah, express the truth concerning Israel. They had been warned times without number; Jehovah testified unto Israel by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways. Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the necks of their fathers. And this recalls the time when their fathers turned aside in the wilderness and made the golden calf, and the words came to Moses: "I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people." And from that time till the time of the Martyr Stephen, they were stiff-necked, stubborn, people. To this Stephen bore witness when he called out: "Ye stiff necked, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye."

Resist the Peril of Petrifaction. The petrifying stream at Knaresborough is well known. It is a cascade from the river Nidd, about fifteen feet high and twice as broad, and forms an aqueous curtain to a cave. The dripping waters are used for petrifying anything that may be hung up in the drip of the water-ledge, which flows over, as it were, the eaves of the cave. This ledge of limestone rock is augmented unceasingly by the action of the water which flows over it. In the cascade a great variety of objects are hung up by short lengths of wire, and these are petrified, turned into rock, by the water trickling over them. Sponges, books, gloves, veils, animals, and birds subjected to the action of the shower are changed to stone. A sponge is petrified in a few months; some things require a year or two.

Petrifying streams threaten our spiritual life, and unless duly resisted steal away our vitality and leave us with the coldness and hardness of stone. Just as the Yorkshire stream slowly and silently converts what it laves into rock, so through the subtle action of sin the living saint may be imperceptibly changed into a fossil.

Let us set against daily peril, daily watchfulness, fellowship, and worship, and although steeped in a sea of petrifying influences we shall preserve that best of all treasures, the tenderness of the heart. Condensed from *Studies in Life*, by *W. L. Watkinson.*

Even Rocks do Flow. Among the grants made by the Carnegie Institution in support of scientific investigations is one item bearing this strange title, "For investigating the flow of rocks." So, then, the solid rock can flow, and scientific men are interested in ascertaining the exact facts about its flowing, for thereby they learn something in regard to the shaping of the earth's crust under the force of gravity. They have a hydraulic machine capable of producing a pressure of one hundred and twenty tons to the square inch, and under such pressure marble, granite, and other solid rocks actually exhibit the phenomenon of flow, although, needless to say, the rate of motion is exceedingly slow. If the solid rock is capable of flowing, can there be a heart so petrified that it may not yield to the pressure of God?

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A Resolve.

"The year is dead—oh let it die
With all its faults and sinning;
God helping, from this hour we'll try
To make a new beginning.

Not only shall our lips proclaim
Our penitence and sorrow;
Our every act must tell the same,
On every new tomorrow."

Jehovah testified unto Israel by Every Prophet and Every Seer. The supreme miracle of Israel's history is that out of this period of overwhelming doubt there arose certain men like Amos and Hosea, whose faith was strengthened rather than daunted by the problems of the hour, and who beheld with clear vision, not a God weak or capricious who ruled as merely the champion of little Israel, but one supreme God of justice and love, who absolutely and justly controlled the forces of nature as well as the affairs of men. They recognized that the impending advance of Assyria was not because Jehovah was powerless or regardless of the fortunes of his people; it was rather because of Israel's deep-seated guilt. They appreciated the necessity for some great revolutionizing experience which would turn the people from their apostasy and crimes to the recognition of the character and demands of the one true God who had ever guided them from the first, and had in store for them a destiny, if they were but prepared for it, far more glorious than popular poet had ever pictured. Assyria, therefore, was, in their eyes, Jehovah's agent, not of mere judgment, but of that discipline which was necessary before Israel would be prepared for the noble destiny which awaited it.

The Northern Israelites as a whole failed utterly to respond to the plain, convincing appeals of their noblest prophets. Hence the nation lost its life, as Amos and Hosea had predicted. A few thoughtful souls doubtless paid heed, and in their own spiritual experience realized, in the face of public and private disaster, the truth of the words which the prophets had proclaimed. Northern Israel lost its life, but Judah became the heir of its rich spiritual heritage, and preserved and transmitted it, so that to-day that exalted ethical spiritual monotheism, first revealed to a few earnest men and by them flashed before the bewildered vision of the corrupt rulers and leaders of Northern Israel, has become the possession and inspiration of all mankind. *Charles Foster Kent*, in *The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah.*

II. Retribution

Shall Suddenly be Destroyed. The terrible upshot of all was "to provoke the Lord to anger." The New Testament is as emphatic as the Old in asserting that there is a capacity of anger in God whose name is love, and that sin calls it forth. As in the first sin, so in all others, God has said, "Ye shall not do this thing," and we say, "Do it we will." What can the end of that be but the anger of the Lord? "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

To be swept out of his sight is the fate of obstinate rejection of his commandments and pleadings. Israel made itself the slave of evil and was made the captive of Assyria. Self-willed freedom, which does as it likes, and heeds not God, ends in bondage, and is itself bondage. God's anger against sin speaks pleadingly to us all, saying, "Do not this abominable thing that I hate." Well for us if we hearken to his voice when his anger is kindled but a little. If we do not yield to him and cast away our idols we shall become vain as they.

These captives, dragging their weary limbs, with despair in their hearts, across the desert to a land of bondage, were but shadows, in the visible region of things, of the far more doleful and dreary fate that sooner or later must fall on those who will none of God's counsel, and despise all his reproof, but cling to their idol till they and it are destroyed together. *Alexander Maclaren*, in *The Second Book of Kings.*

Who spurns the shrine of Right, nor wealth nor power
Shall be to him a tower. *From the Greek.*

The Crown is Fallen from our Head; Woe unto us that we have Sinned. Ages ago Egypt was the cradle of the Arts, the mother of learning. She had her

chariots of iron, her cities with their hundred gates. She reared her pyramids to stand for ages, monuments of her power and of her tyranny. She built her massive prisons and forged instruments of torture to girdle the limbs of men. She brought home her captives and overawed her enemies by mere terror of her name; but nothing could she do to elevate her moral life and save her people from decay. Her teeming millions, though victors in war, were themselves vanquished by a stronger power. The God of Nations had been disregarded; his principles set at naught; and his punishment must follow.

Greece followed, so refined, so cultivated, so polished, that the homes of her people were not unworthy of the gods they worshipped; her sculptors and philosophers were their fit companions. If ever culture or refinement could prepetuate a nation and preserve it from decay, then Greece had never fallen. But at the very time when her orators and philosophers were crowning themselves with a wreath of immortal honor, her people had sunk into such sensual and degrading practices as would pollute the lips that named them. At the very time when the ruined temples were standing in their proud magnificence, the cry of her seers was rising to the gods who could not help them. "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned!"

Rome followed with her foot of iron with which she crushed the nations. Her soldiers crossed the Alps and Pyrene s and changed the destinies of Europe. They carried the sword into Africa until the sands of the Sahara alone debarred their way. They disturbed the peace of the East, and, anon, planted their standard in Britain, claiming for themselves a universal Empire. Rome did much for the world. She civilised the countries she crushed; she constructed roads upon her blood-stained track; she flung bridges across rivers she forded; she made laws; beneficent for herself—a rich legacy for us But she could not heal the wound which was shortening her days. The highest precept she could give to her deluded people was simply this: "Live every day as if the eye of Cato were upon you." What a piteous antidote for the ravening disease of moral misery! It needed no seer to foretell the fate of such a nation.

And side by side with these great nations—Egypt, Greece, and Rome—the Hebrew people were writing their history in the words of blood. Abraham pitched his tent in Mesopotamia at the time when Egypt was in the glory of her youth. Titus stormed the city of Jerusalem and humbled her pride when Rome had reached her highest pinnacle of power. In that great interval the history of Israel was like an oft-repeated tale—coming to God—wandering away again; prostrating themselves before Jehovah with tears and supplication, in sackcloth and ashes, and anon debasing themselves with incestuous idolatry and rebellious sedition. One year they were sitting peaceable and quiet at their judge's feet, another year found them crying for deliverance from the trouble into which their sin had brought them. Chastened by Philistines and Edomites; enemies without; weakened by sedition within; they were at last subjugated by a mightier power and scattered to every corner of the earth, where they weary heaven with repeated lamentation.

And now we turn to our nation and ask what will be the record of her fate. Is it to be ever thus? Is every nation to decay and fall after living a few short centuries? Is every citizen to believe that his country's banner will one day be trailing in the dust? Is every man to be haunted by the consciousness that he is not what he might have been? Is every stranger to prowl among the ruins of his former greatness and exclaim: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned!"

Why has it ever been thus? Is it not because the God of Nations has been disregarded? Because men have been blind enough to beat the music out in tune with their own ideas? Because they have deified the Ego and dethroned the Almighty? Priding themselves upon their achievements they have mounted their walls and cried with that Eastern arrogant king, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" Nations have decayed, not for lack of power, but for lack of piety. Failure has swooped upon us because we would not give to God the glory of success. Even when their walls were tottering many a people would have preserved their name had they the humility to acknowledge to the Supreme Sovereign: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned."

Thus we hear a note of hope ringing through this wail of woe. To a proud people it is a cry of despair. To a pious people it is a pæan of victory. We stand among the ruins of the past and see how short we have fallen of the glory of God. Failure

besets us on every hand. Past achievements are marred with imperfections. Present duties are blighted by our incompetence. Future prospects are clouded by shadows from the past. We lift our heart to heaven and cry with all humility; "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned!" But the winds of heaven which waft our prayer to God bear back to us the message of hope: "Fear not for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name. Thou art Mine." *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *J. Frederic Sanders.*

III The Birthday of Jesus: Luke 2.1–20

God's Love. Our last two lessons have been about God's love for his people. In many ways God showed his love for them, and sent them messages of love through his prophets. But there came a day when he showed his love for all the world in a wonderful way, and brought his message of love through the greatest of all his messengers, his own beloved Son. This week we shall keep the birthday of Jesus who was God coming to earth in the form of a Babe.

Is There a Santa Claus? No Santa Claus? Yes, there is a Santa Claus, thank God! The world would indeed be poor without one. It is true that he does not always wear a white beard and drive a reindeer team—but what does it matter? He is Santa Claus with the big, loving Christmas heart, for all that; Santa Claus with the kind thoughts for every one that make children and grown-up people beam with happiness all day long.

And shall I tell you a secret which I did not learn at the post-office, but it is true all the same—of how you can always be sure your letters go to him straight by the chimney route? It is this: send along with them a friendly thought for the boy you don't like; for Jack, who punched you; or Jim, who was mean to you. The meaner he was the harder do you resolve to make it up; not to bear him a grudge. That is the stamp for the letter to Santa. Nobody can stop it, not even a cross-draught in the chimney, when it has that on.

Because—don't you know, Santa Claus is the spirit of Christmas: and ever and ever so many years ago, when the dear little Baby was born after whom we call Christmas, and was cradled in the manger because there was not room in the inn, that Spirit came into the world to soften the hearts of men and make them love one another. Therefore, that is the mark of the Spirit to this day. Don't let anybody or anything rub it out. Then the rest doesn't matter. Let them tear Santa's white beard off at the Sunday-school festival and growl in his bearskin coat. These are only his disguises. The steps of the real Santa Claus you can trace all through the world as you have done here with me, and when you stand in the last of his tracks you will find the Blessed Babe of Bethlehem smiling a welcome to you. For then you will be home. *Jacob A. Riis.*

When a Little Black Boy first Heard about the Christ Child. Far over in Africa one day a missionary passed through a village. He stayed only a few hours, but while he was there he gathered the people together and told them the Christmas story about Bethlehem and about the wonderful Child who was born there. You know the story well, but to these poor black people it was all new. Among the crowd that gathered about the missionary was a little black boy, who did not take his eyes off the minister's face once during the talk. The minister smiled at him when he said good-bye, and asked him if he liked the story. He nodded his head and smiled back. "Then," said the minister, "tell it to some one who needs Christ's help very much."

After the missionary had gone away, the little boy thought of a little forlorn shepherd boy on the hills who had a cruel master. Once the shepherd boy had helped the other boy when he was hurt, and had taken him home, so it was this shepherd boy that the little African missionary boy thought of right away. He went to hunt for him and found him taking care of some sheep on the plains. When he told him, as best he could, about the Babe of Bethlehem, the shepherd boy said: "I am going to find him. Is he at the station at Kuruman?"

"I think he must be there," said the little black boy, "because they sing songs about him there."

The little shepherd boy went on his search, and he really found the station, and good people there who were glad to take care of him and tell him more of the wonderful story. He did not see the Babe of Bethlehem, but he found the Saviour in just the same way any child can find him by going to him in prayer, with a loving trustful heart.

"As a candle in the night
Sends abroad its cheerful light
So a little word may be.
Like a lighthouse in the sea." *Picture Story Paper.*

A Good Resolution for Christmas. "I am going to make the New Year one long Christmas." That is what a schoolboy said last year. Did he mean that he was going to give presents every day in the year? That would be very foolish, of course. Just what did he mean? This is what he said when questioned. "I have been thinking, what is the good of Christmas if it means giving gifts and getting gifts and going to church and being kind for only one day in the year. It sounds awfully goody-goody, but, after all, it really isn't. I am going to try to give attention to my teachers in school, give obedience to my parents at home, and kindness to my friends everywhere." Then after a pause he continued: "I guess those gifts, if I really do as I say, will be about the best gift I could give the Christ-child."

"We'll bring him hearts that love him,
We'll bring him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving
To walk in holy ways;
And these shall be the treasures
We offer to the King;
And these are gifts that even
The poorest child may bring."

A Christmas Prayer.

"Father of all, our grateful thanks we bring,
For this glad Christmas with its merry joy;
For the dear Christ-child sent to us from heaven,
Given by thy love, a little baby Boy."

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Have a heart that never hardens. *Dickens.*

John the Baptist took up the warning of the prophets and urged the people of his day to turn from the evil ways, to repent and to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. Beginning from the time of his baptism Jesus the Christ said, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Have we disregarded his warning?

There were many causes which led to the fall of Samaria, but the sacred historian was right in ascribing the nation's ruin to the nation's sin. The people had forged their own chains, and they were taken away as slaves to Assyria. Sin binds its slaves hand and foot. Know ye not, questions Paul, that his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or obedience unto righteousness? We know this—in general; do our lives prove that we know it in special?

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. A corrupt nation deserves extinction. See the Second Topic.
2. The meaning of Christmas. See the *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec. 1913; "The Larger Christmas," *Outlook*, Dec. 23, 1911.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Note-Book Work. In your book of the Kings of Israel write an account of Hoshea and the Downfall of the Kingdom. Draw a map covering Palestine and Assyria, and trace the route from Samaria to Nineveh.

Assign Work for the Review Lesson.

(If you do not need to keep this *Guide*, there is a missionary who would be glad to receive it. Write to Dr. Price, the Superintendent of The Surplus Material Department of the World's Sunday School Association, Metropolitan Tower, New York City, for the missionary's address.)

REVIEW—JEHOVAH'S GRACIOUS PROMISES TO ISRAEL

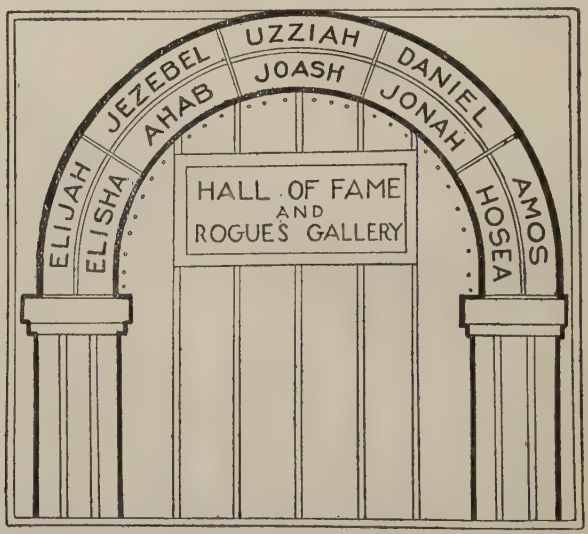
Golden Text

Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness. Psalm 103.8

READ Hosea 14

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

Have the diagram below drawn upon the blackboard with the names omitted from the arch. Upon the other end of the board write the headings, "Chief Persons", "Chief Facts", and by questions secure the answers below, writing them after they have been given. After the two columns are filled, ask for names to write upon the door of the "Hall of Fame and Rogues' Gallery", and call for the reasons which entitle each name to a place there.



Chief Persons	Chief Facts
1. Naboth, Ahab, Jezebel, Elijah.	A Great Sin.
2. Elijah, Elisha.	A Great Translation.
3. Naaman, Syrian Maiden, Elisha.	A Great Cure.
4. King of Syria, Elisha, Servant.	A Great Vision.
5. Athaliah, Jehosheba, Jehoiada, Joash.	A Great Rescue.
6. Joash, Jehoiada, Workmen.	A Great Restoration.
7. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Steward, Nebuchadnezzar.	A Great Abstinence.
8. Jonah, Ninevites.	A Great Missionary.
9. Amos, Israelites.	A Great Prophet.
10. Uzziah, Azariah.	A Great Punishment.
11. Hosea, Israelites.	A Great Compassion.
12. Hoshea, Shalmaneser, Sargon II.	A Great Captivity.

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Before class time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each circle should be covered by a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

If you have drawn a picture each week, as suggested, your pupils will enjoy them and the talks about them all the more because they are familiar.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Lesson I. A sulking man is lying on his couch and a woman is talking to him. Another scene shows a crowd of people throwing stones at a man. In a third scene there are two men; one of them is talking and the other is listening with much interest, but now he hangs his head in silence. What is the man sulking over? What is the woman telling him? Who was stoned? Who was the man talking in the third scene and what was he saying? Why does the other man hang his head? What was the Golden Text for this lesson?

Lesson II. Two men are walking silently along a road. They stop several times to speak with other men. A number of men follow them to a river and stop while the two cross. Who are the men? What is said between the younger man and the others? Who follow them to the river? Where do the two men go? What does the younger man ask of the older man and what does the latter answer? What happens?

Lesson III. I see a palace, where a young girl is talking to a woman. Now I see chariots being prepared for a journey. The chariots are now stopping before another palace, and the king within is much excited. Next, the chariots are before a humble house. A man comes out and says something. The man in the first chariot looks angry, but after talking with the others he drives on to a river. Who is the little girl and what is she saying to the woman? What does the woman's husband decide to do? What is his name? Where does he go first? Why is the king excited? Where does he go next? What did the messenger of Elisha tell him to do? Why did this not please him? What did the others say about it? Where did he go? What happened? What is the Golden Text for this lesson?

Lesson IV. A camp scene where a king is talking excitedly with his men. An early morning scene, where two men are on the flat roof of a house. The older man is praying. The younger man now looks off eagerly. What king did I see in the first scene? Where was he? What was he talking about? What two men did I see in the second scene? What was the prayer of the older man? What did the young man see? What was the Golden Text for this lesson? What does it mean?

Lesson V. There is great excitement, and a woman is carrying a baby into a dark room where she hides it. In the second scene there are hosts of men, all of them bearing weapons. Now I see a young boy and they are putting a crown upon his head. What was the cause of the excitement in the first scene? Who was the baby? Who was hiding him? Where? What was happening in the second scene?

Lesson VI. A king is talking to some priests. The next scene is in a temple into which people are coming; they put something into a chest as they enter. Now what was in the chest is being taken out and put up in packages. Many workmen are busy in the temple. Who was the king? What did he tell the priests? Did they do this? For what was the chest? Did the people give enough? What were the workmen doing? What was the Golden Text for that lesson?

Lesson VII. A young man is in a king's palace, talking with a king's officer. Now the young man is talking with another man. Next I see many young men eating delicacies and drinking wine, while in another room there are four young men who are eating plain fare and drinking water. In the last scene these four young men are standing before a king and he is talking to them. Who is the young man who does the talking? Where is he? How did he happen to be there? What is he saying to the officer and what did the officer reply? What then did he say to the other man? What did the other promise to do? What was the result? What was the king saying to the four young men?

Lesson VIII. A man is approaching a big city. He goes throughout the city and everywhere he talks to large crowds. The people now have clad them-

I
A double portion of thy spirit
II
III
IV
JOASH
V
VI
VII
A MISSIONARY
VIII
Hate the Evil
Love the Good
IX
X
XI
XII
GOD'S LOVE
GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abundant
in lovingkindness.
PSALM 103:8

selves in coarse cloth, they do not eat, and they are praying. Who is the man? Where did he go? Why? What did he say? What did the people do? For what did they pray? Did God hear them? What was our Golden Text?

Lesson IX. A man is talking about sin and repentance and forgiveness. Who is he? Where did he come from? To whom is he talking? What did he tell them to seek?

Lesson X. A great king is thinking proudly of his cities with towers and engines for war, and the watch towers scattered throughout his kingdom. Still thinking of them, he enters the temple, but there a priest stops him. Who is the king? What did he try to do in the temple? Who objected? Why? How was the king punished? What was the Golden Text for this lesson?

Lesson XI. A man is talking about God's goodness and patience. Who is he? To whom is he talking? Did the people turn to God? What happened to their capital? What happened to the people?

Lesson XII. It is night. The stars are shining. There are shepherds with their flocks in the field. Suddenly a great light shines about them. Tell the rest of the glad story. What was the Golden Text? For whom were the good tidings?

QUESTIONS FOR AN ORAL REVIEW

Instead of asking these questions, they may be written one each upon a slip of paper (as many slips for each question as the number of your pupils) and the answers may be written beneath in class. Give out additional slips with new questions as they are called for.

For Younger Pupils. 1. Who was Naboth? 2. What wicked deed did Ahab and Jezebel do? 3. What story did Elijah tell Ahab that showed him how wicked he had been? 4. How did Elijah's life end? 5. Who was prophet after Elijah? 6. Who was Naaman? 7. How did he learn that he could be cured, and what did the cure teach him? 8. Where did an invisible host surround a prophet and who was the prophet? 9. Whose life was saved by hiding him in a bed-chamber? 10. What king repaired the temple? 11. What four young men dared to do what was right? 12. What prophet tried to run away from God and with what result? 13. What did God want him to do? 14. What man was a fearless prophet? 15. What prophet told the people about God's love? 16. What king fell through pride? 17. Why did Samaria fall? 18. When and by whom was Samaria taken? 19. Where were the people taken after the fall of Samaria?

For Older Pupils. 1. What two reigns in Israel were politically the most important? 2. What king of Judah was humbled? 3. What great Syrian was humbled? 4. How was Joash's life saved as a baby and for what is his reign memorable? 5. What was Elisha's last request of Elijah, and what did he mean by it? 6. How did Elijah prove himself a champion of an individual? 7. What was the last recorded sin that Elijah rebuked? 8. How did Ahab show himself selfish? Weak? 9. Upon what errand did God send an unwilling prophet? 10. What king was very covetous, what did he do, and how was he punished? 11. What happened at Dothan, and what lesson has that record for us? 12. Give two miracles wrought through Elijah. 13. What qualities did Daniel show? 14. What qualities did Jonah show? 15. What qualities did Amos show? 16. What qualities did Hosea show? 17. What is the date of the fall of Samaria, and how long did the Northern Kingdom last? 18. What was the cause of the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom from the standpoint of geography? Of history? Of religion?

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOKS

1. What Books have we studied this Quarter? 2. What history is covered by Second Kings? 3. Where in the Bible will you find the account of the translation of Elijah? 4. Where will you find the account of Elisha's heavenly defenders? 5. Where will you find the first statement about the love of God? 6. Where will you find the account of the Fall of Samaria and the captivity of the Ten Tribes? For review questions upon the Book of Second Kings, see p. 341; upon Daniel, p. 431; upon Jonah, p. 439; upon Amos, p. 449; upon Hosea, p. 465.

QUESTIONS UPON THE LESSON TRUTHS

1. What king learned that he might be sure his sin would find him out? Of what sins had he been guilty? Who had helped him?

2. What instance is there in our lessons of willing giving? How did that same lesson show the beauty of trustworthiness?

3. How was a man taught the folly of being unwilling to do a thing because it was simple?

4. What man was unable to bear prosperity? What are the dangers of prosperity?

5. What Old Testament book is a foreign missionary book? What was Christ's command in regard to missionary work? What can our class do for missions?

6. What prophet spoke words that awaken our conscience concerning the poor? Is our class doing anything for the poor?

7. What event showed that God's purposes cannot be frustrated? How does that lesson show that one resolute person can accomplish the impossible?

8. What is the lesson taught us by Elisha's great wish asked of Elijah?

9. Who is our Great Ally? How may our eyes be opened to his presence with us?

10. What lesson is an example of great moral courage? How is that also a good temperance lesson?

11. In what words did Hosea teach that God is love? How did he teach that God is long-suffering? How did he teach that God is justice?

12. What are the lessons for us from the fall of Samaria?

SUBJECTS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW

For Younger Pupils. Tell—

1. The story of a man who wanted his own way, of a woman who gained it for him, and the result.
2. The story of a captive maiden who helped her master.
3. How a young man learned that God was helping him.
4. How a good woman saved a baby's life.
5. About the crowning of a boy king.
6. The story of a temple chest.
7. How a boy proved himself courageous and loyal to his faith.
8. About a prophet who was a foreign missionary.

For Older Pupils.

1. Jezebel and Lady Macbeth.
2. Elijah as champion of justice.
3. Steadfast devotion as illustrated by Ruth and by Elisha.
4. The end of the lives of Moses and Elijah.
5. A comparison of Elijah and Elisha.
6. An account of events in Elisha's life from Gehazi's point of view.
7. What good came through a girl in captivity?
8. What good came through a young man in captivity?
9. The history of idolatry in the Northern Kingdom.
10. A connected history of the leading events in Israel from the reign of Ahab to the Fall of Samaria.
11. A connected history of the leading events in Judah from the reign of Athaliah to the Fall of Samaria.
12. The story of Jonah in four chapters: A Great Refusal; A Great Deliverance; A Great Repentance; A Great Lesson.
13. How our School is interested in Home and Foreign Missionary Work.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE YEAR'S WORK

1. To what characters in our year's course can the title "Man of God" be applied? 2. What sulky persons have we seen in our year's lessons? 3. What proud persons? 4. What cruel persons? 5. What persons of great faith? 6. What persons of prayer? 7. What persons of zeal for God? 8. What are your favorite characters of the year? 9. What boy heard God calling him? 10. What farmer's son was made a king? 11. What shepherd boy became a king? 12. What king lost the greater part of his kingdom and why? 13. What do you admire most in David? 14. What do you admire most in Solomon? 15. Name three important judges of Israel, and tell what each one did. 16. Name the kings of United Israel, and give a fact about each. 17. Who were the leading kings of the Northern Kingdom? 18. Who were the good kings of the Northern Kingdom? 19. Who were the leading kings of the Southern Kingdom before the fall of Samaria? 20. Who were the good kings of Judah? 21. Who were the great prophets of the

Northern Kingdom? 22. Who were the great prophets of the Southern Kingdom? 23. What was the origin of the word "shibboleth"? 24. What woman was a judge over Israel? 25. What prince sought to be remembered by a pillar? 26. What was the name of David's great-grand-mother? 27. What were the names of David's sons who rebelled against him? 28. What wise choice did Solomon make? 29. What was the most important event in Solomon's reign? 30. What happened after Solomon's death? Why did it happen? 31. Who had formed his own idea as to the way in which God must work, and how did he learn differently? 32. Who were Jehosheba and Jehoiada, and what service did they render to Judah? 33. What deeds of Elijah earned for him the title of Elijah the Reformer? 34. What deeds of Elisha earned for him the title of Elisha the Helper? 35. Who were the first and the last kings of the Northern Kingdom? 36. How did the Northern Kingdom come to an end? Why?

A REVIEW OF BOOKS STUDIED

1. Name the Historical Books of the Old Testament. 2. What period is covered by Judges? 3. What is the historical setting of Ruth? 4. What period is covered by First Samuel? 5. What is the period covered by Second Samuel? 6. What period is covered by First Kings? 7. What is the period covered by Second Kings? 8. With what earlier recorded history is First Chronicles parallel? 9. With what earlier recorded history is Second Chronicles parallel? 10. What are the different view-points of Kings and Chronicles? 11. Why do we have two Books each of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles? 12. In what kingdom only is Chronicles interested? 13. Repeat one of the Psalms learned this year. 14 Give six facts concerning the Psalter. 15. What is the historical background of Amos? 16. What is the historical background of Hosea? 17. What is the historical background of Daniel? 18. What is the historical background of Jonah? 19. What is the great missionary Book of the Old Testament? 20. What is known about the prophet Hosea? 21. What is known about the prophet Amos? 22. What is known about the prophet Jonah? 23. What is known about the prophet Daniel? 24. Give three facts about each of the Books studied this year. 25. Give the lessons for today from each of the four prophetical Books of the course.

A REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S WORK BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

For a written review, write each quotation on a separate sheet of paper, as many of each as you have pupils, and let the pupils tell the occasion, or the story in brief, to which the quotation alludes. As soon as a pupil has finished with one, let him have another.

As an oral review much interest will be aroused by letting all who recognize the allusion signify this after the reading of each quotation. Call for the statement.

Up, Christians, leave your caves and do! *F. B. Meyer.*
Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave Maria
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls with devotion translated,
Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah, ascending to heaven. *Longfellow.*

We also have our calling of God, as truly as any ancient prophet; and round us also the tempest at times shouts, and beneath our feet the earthquake trembles, and about us fire threatens to destroy. Well for us if at such times we can wrap our mantle about our face, open the eye and ear of the spirit, and hear the "still small voice" within. *John Page Hopps.*

Here in the brush it is delightful again and again to watch how God hears you scraping the bottom of the meal barrel. *Dan Crawford.*

If, like David, I am only an instrument of gathering materials and another must build the house, I trust my joy will be none the less. *William Carey.*

My lonely gourd is withered in an hour!
I droop, I faint beneath the scorching sun. *Charlotte Elliott.*

Why, my soul, sittest thou by the brook Cherith,
When the wine of life is nigh at hand? *Thomas Champness.*

The sun is set; and in his latest beams
Yon little cloud of ashen gray and gold,
Slowly upon the amber air unrolled,
The falling mantle of the Prophet seems. *Longfellow.*

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On Carmel's height, a strong man bowed in prayer;
Helpless apart from God, in prayer he bowed. *Winifred A. Iverson.*

We may win our vineyard, but all the pleasure in it goes when conscience accosts us at the gate. *F. B. Meyer.*

There are, who, like the seer of old,
Can see the helpers God has sent,
And how life's rugged mountain-side
Is white with many an angel tent! *Whittier.*

God brought Lincoln in sight of the Promised Land, and then sent him home in a chariot of flame. *Dr. Hillis.*

The young man who has fought and been worsted in his first encounter, thinks, "Lo, I alone am left." *Seymour Deming.*

"The things of this world, like Absalom's mule, run away and leave us when we have most need of them."

Thou biddest me to utter
Words that I scarce may speak;
And mighty things are laid on me,
A helpless one and weak;
Darkly thy truth declareth
Its purpose and its way:
Speak, for thy servant heareth
And heareth to obey. *Julia Ward Howe.*

Reading among the prophets, we are too ready to conclude that the prophet stood on one side, and the nation *en masse* on the other; and that besides him there was none righteous, no, not one. *A. B. Davidson.*

Life's great things, like the Syrian lad,
Our hearts can do and dare,
But oh! we shrink from Jordan's wave,
From waters which alone can save. *Whittier.*

"We may not be surprised at any abomination prevailing in far-distant corners of the globe, where every man does what is right in his own eyes."

It is a privilege to live with open eyes in the age of such a conflict, to hear the tumult of the chariots and horsemen, and to discern in all the master hand of God. *Dr. R. E. Speer.*

Elijah paces up and down in his solitary valley, safe and satisfied, and rejoices, like Jonah, to imagine the fearful execution of the sentence of the indignant God. *George Hodges.*

I pray God, Madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland, if it be the pleasure of God, as ever Deborah was in the commonwealth of Israel. *Knox to Queen Mary.*

The fields seem fields of dreams, where memory wanders like gleaning Ruth. *J. R. Lowell.*

There is a peculiar freshness of interest in interrogating the very language employed by an Isaiah or a Paul, until, like the carcass of Samson's lion, it yields meat and sweetness. *F B. Meyer.*

It is best to be guided by his eye, and not need "bit and bridle"; but if we make ourselves stubborn as "the mule, which has no understanding," it is second best that we should taste the whip, that it may bring us to run in harness on the road which he wills. *Dr. Maclaren.*

It is when his picture is complete, and his audience is absorbed in watching the development of the plot that he suddenly drops the style of the narrator, and comes to close quarters with the dagger-thrust of "Thou art the man." *F. B. Meyer.*

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